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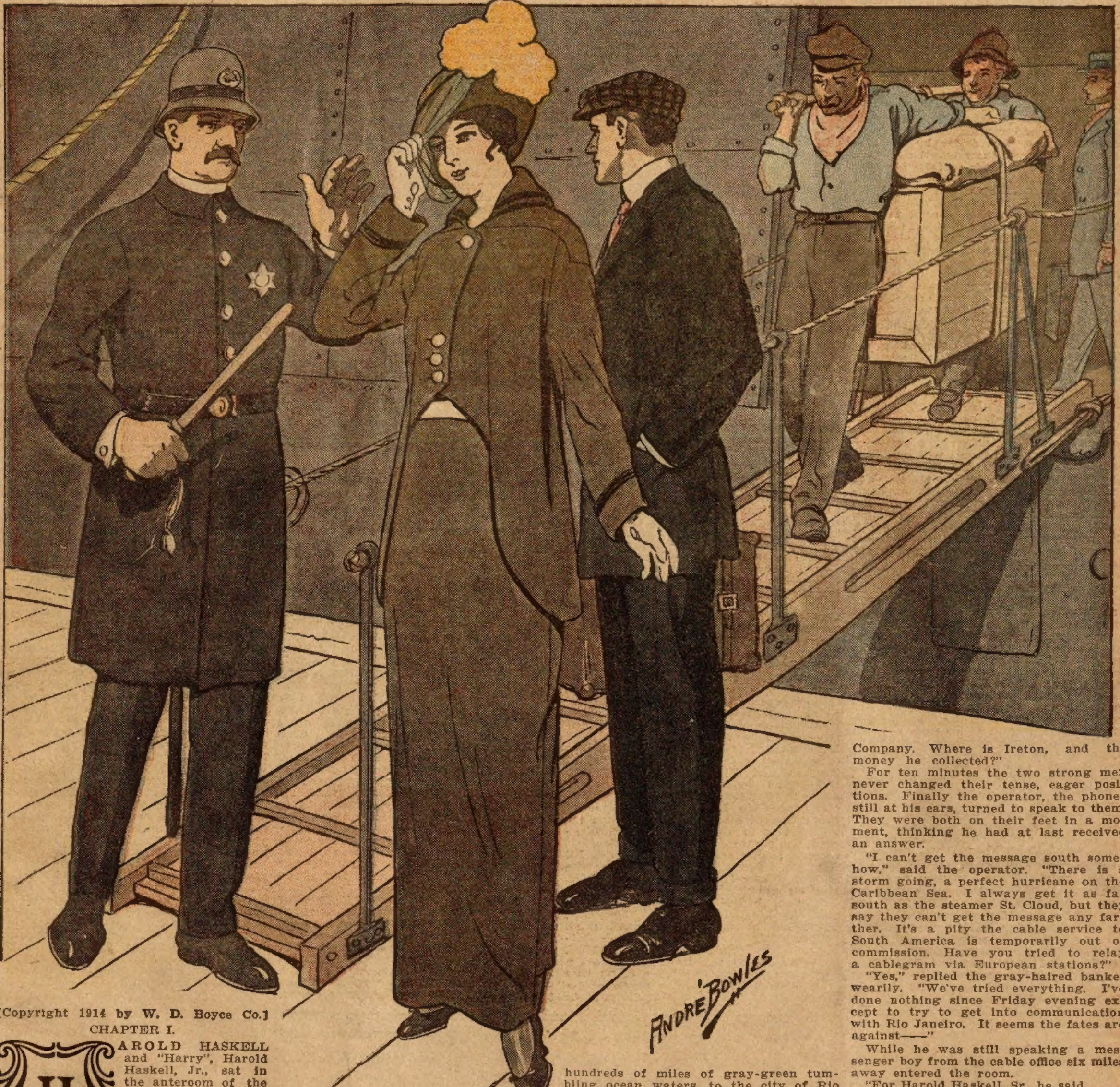
FOR FAMILY HONOR

Or, A WORLD WIDE SEARCH

By AUGUSTIN W. BREEDEN AND DR. H. L. SMITH



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CHAPTER I.

HAROLD HASKELL and "Harry", Harold Haskell, Jr., sat in the anteroom of the wireless station at Hurricane Point, one hundred miles south of New York City. A tense silence lay upon them. The older man, the gray-haired president of the Pan-American Banking and Securities Company, showed a vertical frown between his eyes as he watched through the doorway the expression on the face of the man who had receivers at his ears. It was Sunday, and since before dawn these two men, father and son, had sat thus watching the man who was trying to get a message relayed south for them and relayed back again over hundreds and hundreds of miles of gray-green tumbling ocean waters, to the city of Rio de Janeiro, South America.

Suddenly they both sat forward and listened eagerly. The operator was "sending" again. They had listened to the click and spurt of this identical message repeated so many times that day that they had at last learned it by note.

"Paul Harrington, Rio de Janeiro, care Pan-American Banking and Securities Company. Where is Ireton, and the money he collected?"

For ten minutes the two strong men never changed their tense, eager positions. Finally the operator, the phones still at his ears, turned to speak to them. They were both on their feet in a moment, thinking he had at last received an answer.

"I can't get the message south somehow," said the operator. "There is a storm going, a perfect hurricane on the Caribbean Sea. I always get it as far south as the steamer St. Cloud, but they say they can't get the message any farther. It's a pity the cable service to South America is temporarily out of commission. Have you tried to relay a cablegram via European stations?"

"Yes," replied the gray-haired banker wearily. "We've tried everything. I've done nothing since Friday evening except to try to get into communication with Rio Janeiro. It seems the fates are against——"

While he was still speaking a messenger boy from the cable office six miles away entered the room.

"For Harold Haskell, Sr., he said.

In an instant the father had signed for the little envelope and he and his son were reading it together.

It read as follows:

"Harold Haskell, Sr.,
Care of Pan-American Banking and Securities Co.,
New York City, N. Y., U. S. A.

"Relayed from Rio de Janeiro via wireless to Steamship Madrid, Steamship

Dunbar Castle, Lisbon, Portugal, and Havre, France.

"Ireton sailed, tramp Calliope; destination unknown; about seven hundred thousand dollars, gold, B. of E. notes, U. S. Treas. notes. Tramp, no wireless. Trying to reach other vessels; storm raging. P. HARRINGTON."

The face of the older man turned ashen-gray as he read these lines.

"We are ruined, my son," he half whispered, "ruined and disgraced."

Father and stalwart son had stepped outside upon the windswept beach, where others would not hear their conversation. As Harry Haskell looked into the face of his trembling father, no one who saw him could have helped admiring the courage and determination that was depicted at that moment on his brave face. Harry was a born fighter, a born man of affairs. Now he flung a sort of forelock of chestnut-brown hair back from his high forehead and his eyes flashed as they had once flashed at the beginning of certain well-remembered end runs on the Yale gridiron.

"Father, they shall never take you to jail," he said. "I shall shoot the first man that tries to lay hands on you. You are no more guilty of a crime than scores of other bankers in New York. The thing you did is done every day on Wall Street and nothing said. Everything would have been perfectly fair and square had this scoundrel Ireton not proved a thief."

"Yes," replied the father; "with the seven hundred thousand that I instructed Ireton to call in from the banks in South America and to transmit to me here, we could have weathered the storm. As it is we will close our doors tomorrow morning, and I will be a prisoner in another twenty-four hours. Son, I don't mind going to jail so much; what I do mind is that hundreds and hundreds of innocent depositors and stockholders, men and women who had confidence in my personal integrity, will suffer by this act of mine. But you know why I did it. I extended our company's security in order to try to help the man who made me all that I ever was. If Colonel Wentworth had not failed and failed utterly we should never have been caught in this pinch today. It cost the dear old man his life; it will cost me no less. I shall die in prison. But my boy, I want you to find Philip Ireton and the money he has if he is in the world. Use it to pay our creditors just as far as it will go, and then, dear boy, if you can, and if it is not too great a burden for you and poor Daisy Wentworth, spend a few years of your life in trying to make the money to pay all our creditors, and if possible, all the Wentworth creditors as well. Go now, my boy, and may God's blessing be upon your head and upon the head of the brave girl who has consented some day to be your wife."

"Father, you shall never go to jail!" cried the young man. "Let me aid you to escape. Let me hide you somewhere in safe-keeping and then I will hunt this villain Ireton to earth and make him pay back every cent he has stolen. Yes and I will pay every cent that our company honorably owes; I will not leave a cent unpaid. And if I live long enough, I will pay every cent of the Wentworth Company as well. But father, I cannot see you go to jail. It will break my heart."

"Listen, my boy. I am an old man. It makes little difference what becomes of me. Honor is the thing. We must pay our creditors. If you are taking half your time trying to hide me from the law, you will probably fail to find Ireton, at least you may fail to find him before he has made way with all that money. He must be found at once. You must be unhampered. Here is two hundred dollars; I am sorry I can furnish you with no more. I have sold some of your dead mother's trinkets to pay for all this telegraphing, because I could not bear to touch another cent of the money that I knew no longer belonged to me. Take this and go now, and then you will not have the pain of seeing your poor old father arrested like a common thief."

The son had opened his lips to protest. When a second messenger arrived on a motor cycle. He carried a note from sweet Daisy Wentworth, which he at once handed to the trembling son.

"Dear Harry: You will have to fly, or you will be arrested along with your poor, old father. They claim that you made false use of your power of attorney in connection with my poor, dead father's failure. I know everything, the substance of the message you have just received, etc. You must find Philip Ireton and force him to give up the money; and you and I must spend our lives in paying our fathers' creditors. Go at once. I will watch by your father while he is in prison as if he were my own. Go and may God's blessing be upon you.

"N. B.—If you delay only a few minutes, all may be lost. Don't answer this.

"Yours with a breaking heart.

"DAISY.

As the son finished reading the note he passed it to his father to read. "I guess you are right, father," he said. "I might as well go. But I will hunt that scoundrel Ireton to earth, and he shall pay for your dishonor with his life's blood."

The father had not read halfway through the note when the rapid staccato of another motorcycle was heard coming rapidly down the beach. The son hurriedly shook his father's hand, and without trusting himself to look back, leaped upon the motorcycle which his sweetheart's messenger thrust upon him and rode rapidly away down the wide-curving, wind-swept beach, just as a county policeman came into sight.

CHAPTER II.

BILLY SANGREE.

HARRY HASKELL left the messenger's motorcycle at a little station forty miles south of Hurricane Point and there managed to take a train for New Orleans. Forty-eight hours later, disguised as a common laborer, and speaking only German, with which he was perfectly familiar, he got off the train at Crescent City. He bought a New York German newspaper. And there he read about his father's arrest, about his own flight, and about the failure of the Pan-American Banking and Securities Company. In another portion of the paper he read an advertisement inserted by the receivers of the firm offering a reward for the arrest and detention of one Philip Ireton, followed by a description of that person. Just below it was the offer of a reward for his own arrest, followed by an accurate description of himself.

He decided at once to take passage aboard The City of Maracaibo for the South American port of Bahai. He knew that this action might arouse suspicion, and so he decided to book his passage as reading for William Rinehart and wife. He knew that the detectives were well aware of the fact that Daisy Wentworth was still in New York City, and that they would not scrutinize a passenger entry that had "and wife" written upon it. Harry was about to attempt the most desperate ruse that a fugitive could possibly undertake. In the Bohemian quarter of New Orleans he had a friend, Billy Sangree, that looked so much like a girl that when he was at Yale the boys used to call him Sally Sangree. This fellow was a poet in a small way, a painter, a beggar, an adventurer, a true Bohemian. The best thing about his acquaintance with Harry was that very few people knew that they were friends, they not having been much together at Yale because the elder Haskell had strongly objected to his son's forming an intimacy with such a wild fellow. Now Harry went into the Bohemian quarter and soon came upon Billy, lounging on the grass of a "banquette," playing a flute for a lot of Creole children to dance by.

"Hello, Billy," he said in German. "Sh, don't seem to recognize me, I'm in trouble. Get up and stroll to your lodgings or to some place where we can talk in private."

Billy was so surprised that he played several false notes on the flute; but he played the tune out to the end and then got lazily to his feet and strolled down the Rue Royal toward the Cabildo. He went only a block in that direction when he suddenly turned back as if he had forgotten something, and after one or more careless turns wound up at a back entrance on the old Hotel Royal. There he waited in the alleyway until he was sure Harry saw him there and then deliberately opened a door of the old hotel and disappeared within, leaving the door ajar. In two more minutes Harry had followed him in, and into a tiny room, so dark that it had to be artifically lighted with an oil lamp. It communicated with a long, dark hall but not at all with the outside daylight.

"Welcome," cried Billy Sangree, "welcome, my friend, to my all too unworthy apartments. You see me here in poor surroundings. But here I do low living and high thinking. In an attic like this—save that this is not an attic—genius has always budded and blossomed. Here I expect to write that drama that will make the greatest of English and French dramatists, both living and dead, hide their unworthy heads in shame. But to what happy circumstances do I owe the pleasure of this unexpected visit? I would have expected you to be a dignified, bewhiskered bank president long ere this. It seems eons since we were at Old Eli together. How's Daisy? And does she still sign herself "Miss" or is she Mrs. Haskell now?"

"Listen, Billy," said Harry at last, still speaking in German. "You have not heard about the Wentworth Bank failure and about my father's bank failing as a consequence? No? Well, such are the facts. And, Billy, I am a fugitive from justice. They claim that I made an illegal use of a power of attorney given me by my father and to be used in behalf of poor Colonel Wentworth. Billy, I committed no crime in the use of that power of attorney; I am guilty of no crime whatsoever, either in the spirit or in the letter of the law. My father did a thing that was illegal, but he did it to save the honor of the man who had been a father to him and who had made him what he was. I refer to Colonel Wentworth, my sweetheart's father."

"Oh, never mind making excuses for people," replied Billy half laughing and half serious. "You know, Harry, that I am one of the unconventional sort. What to me are the man-made laws of a country like this? I am a citizen of the universe, and an obeyer only of the laws of the higher destinies. Now what can I do to help you?"

"Listen, whispered Harry. "Are you sure there is no one on the other side of these walls that could possibly hear us?"

"Sure of it," cried Billy loudly. "Now you listen and I'll prove to you that we are in a perfect dungeon. He suddenly put his two hands to his mouth and shouted at the top of his voice: "Murder! murder! Come and help me! some one is murdering me!"

There was no response, and after a long wait all was still silence.

"This," said Billy proudly, "is my own discovery. It was a secret wine vault in those good old days when this hostelry was at the height of its fame. Moreover, the caretaker of this building is as deaf as a hitching-post, and the Sicilians that occupy some of the space on the first floor make so much noise cuffing their offspring around and fighting among themselves that no noise save that can possibly be heard on the street outside. Now then whisper your secrets in my ear and be sure they are safe."

"Very well, then," said Harry. "I want you to sail for South America with me tonight. You know you look like a woman. You remember how the boys at Yale used to call you Sally? Well, you must sail from here on board the City of Maracaibo as my wife. She sails at ten or ten thirty tonight. Say that you will sail with me, and I will go back to the ship's office and book our passage as William Rinehart and frau. You will be a German woman, you know, and will speak nothing else. Will you go?"

"Sure!" replied Billy without a moment's hesitation.

"I knew I could depend on you," said Harry.

And so by two o'clock that afternoon he had booked the only remaining stateroom as William Rinehart and wife. He had offered to purchase his bogus wife an entire women's wardrobe, but Billy had told him not to do so, and surprised him upon his return by being all dressed ready to go.

"Where in the world did you get those togs on such short notice?" asked Harry.

"Hist!" crief Billy in a mock-tragic manner. "When Romeo is in need of female attire, will not Juliet fling him the required togs from the balcony above."

"You mean your sweetheart furnished you these clothes."

"She furnished everything. The little corset was the only one she had, and she took it off to give it to me. She even offered to give me her little——" the rest was whispered.

"But won't she tell?"

"Nevaire, as the Frenchies say."

"Won't she ever get jealous and tell?"

"Nevaire. She is Sicilian, and I have always been true to her; ergo, she will never betray me though they should cut out her tongue."

"Billy, you're a jewel and she is, too. You must never betray her. And when I get back the money that this thief, Ireton, has stolen from me, I will give you both enough to make you comfortable and happy for a time at least. What is the name of this Bella Donna?"

"Beatrice on starry nights, Ophelia of afternoons, Portia sometimes. I call her just whatever my fancy dictates. Her last name is Carranza. I would present her to you, but she is really unpresentable at present and will be until—until her old mother can beg some more money or steal her some more clothes."

"And will the mother not tell?" asked Harry, alarmed.

"Listen, Harry," responded Billy with a tolerant smile. "You don't understand these people. I have ever been true as steel to the daughter; therefore the mother will keep my secrets inviolate."

That night at ten o'clock William Rinehart and wife walked down the gangplank of the steamer Maricaibo jabbering German with all their might.

Be sure and read "For Family Honor; or, A World-Wide Search," in this issue. It is a splendid story of sea adventure. Next week a big story of mystery and strange things begins, entitled, "The Electric Flame; or, Brahm Yogi's Power," followed by a fine series, called, "A Millionaire Detective; or, Plumbing the Underworld," and a rattling new boy's story entitled, "Spurs Well Won; or, The Wolf Patrol." These stories are corkers. Don't miss them.

When they were halfway down the plank a slender female form appeared on the dock. She was wrapped in an old shawl, and a thick veil was draped about her face, just as another one was wrapped closely about the face of the false Frau Rinehart. But in spite of all those old wrappings any one could have guessed that she was young and beautiful and charming. Billy turned suddenly back and embraced her for a long minute, raising his veil and kissing her a dozen times. He turned back with something like a sob in his voice as he bade her adieu in sweet Sicilian words.

Harry could not have the heart to chide his friend for taking the risk he did. He was too grateful for the service that the other was rendering him. And as he looked at that poor Sicilian girl standing forlornly on the dock, he made up his mind that if he ever made any money beyond what it took to satisfy the claims of honor that he would make these two simple children the happiest couple in the world.

A police officer stood at the foot of the gangplank and looked closely into the faces of all the passengers, as they went aboard. He asked Harry his name, and Harry replied in German that he did not understand. He asked it the second time, but again Harry answered: "Nicht versteh!" Then the policeman, still eyeing him curiously, tried to ask him his name in German, and Harry, pretending to understand him for the first time, replied "Rinehart—Wilhelm Rinehart, und das is meine frau."

The policeman nodded as if satisfied, but he caught Billy by the arm and started to raise his veil, whereupon Billy very politely raised his veil, and making a perfect old-world courtesy to the officer, smiled in his most charming manner.

"We were certainly in a tight place," breathed Harry as soon as they were safe in their stateroom. "I thought once that the policeman had recognized me. I'll swear he had a photograph of me in his pocket and that he had been studying it all the afternoon. We'll have to look out for plain-clothes men till after we pass the quarantine station. We had better go to bed now. Can you imitate a perfect snore and not overdo the thing?"

"I can imitate anything," replied Billy.

"Very well, we will continue to talk a little German till we have a reasonable time for going to bed, and then you may imitate an average snore and I will lie awake and listen for suspicious noises."

CHAPTER III.

A LETTER OF CREDIT.

NO ONE annoyed the bogus German couple at the quarantine station, which the Maricaibo passed a little after daylight next morning; and by the time the good ship had gotten out into Gulf water Harry and Billy were feeling fairly secure. Billy was sad, for he kept thinking of his poor Beatrice and wondering how she was getting along with her short wardrobe. The Gulf was choppy, and though both young men were good sailors, Harry reported on deck to a German-speaking understeward that his frau was confined to her berth with seasickness. The German-speaking understeward tried to get sympathetic and friendly, whereupon Harry at once assumed a true German brusqueness and even refused to drink a stein with the officer, and retired in a sulky manner to his stateroom.

Of course Frau Rinehart's seasickness lasted a long time. Indeed it lasted in one form or another until they were forty-eight hours from Bahia. Then Billy came on deck by moonlight, when the balmy, spicy night wind made everything seem romantic, and there he sang Die Lorelei in plaintive German, but became exceedingly shy and retired into himself if the friendly understeward attempted any very extensive conversation.

Then one sultry night Harry saw the lights of Bahia shining in the distance, and he felt like a warhorse, eager for the charge. It was while they were getting ready to go ashore that Billy proved himself a real jewel. He fished up from the depth of a little grip he had carried, a letter written for him years before and signed Harold Haskell, Jr. The letter asked that any one who knew the firm of Haskell & Co.—the old firm name of the Pan-American Banking and Securities Company—and who should find the bearer, Billy Sangree, in need of money and actually in want should extend him credit, and that he, Harold Haskell, Jr., would make it good to any reasonable amount.

Harry laughed heartily when he saw this letter. He remembered to have honored that promise more than once, and he also laughed as he noted the saving clauses in it, which had kept Billy from breaking the house of Haskell long ago; namely, the "actually in want" clause and the clause which specified that the amounts should be "reasonable."

"It does me good to see you laugh," cried Billy. "You have hardly smiled since we left New Orleans. Yes, I know it is hard for you to think of your father being in jail, and through no fault of his, and of your sweetheart back there in little old New York worrying about you and praying for you; but I, too, left a sweetheart behind; and light as you think me, I love my little Beatrice, my starry-eyed Bella Donna. But do you guess what I am going to do with this paper? I am going to use it to get us some money. Lots of these South American yaps haven't heard yet of your father's failure; they haven't even heard, some of them, that the firm name has been changed from Haskell & Co. to the Pan-American Company. Now I have a charming way about me. I shall insinuate myself into the good graces of some small banker or shopkeeper who is proud of his connection with the old firm, and then I shall present this little billet-doux and he will forthwith shell down the shekels."

"You will do no such thing," said Harry. "It would be gaining money under false pretenses, and would be entirely dishonorable."

"Now look here, Harry," said Billy. "You're too much of a stickler for honor. How are you to catch this villain Ireton unless you have some money to get about on? If people want to honor your request to let me have money, you let them do so; and then if you want to make a notation of each loan and same day pay it back for me, why you may do that also. But I mean to have some money on the strength of this paper; it has stood me in too many times not to pay you back by standing you in now."

Harry finally had to yield the point, and so two days later their arrival in Bahia Billy, having gotten back into his man's togs, sallied forth to insinuate himself into the confidences of some small banker or shopkeeper who might be wheedled into loaning him a hundred pesos or so on Harry's letter of credit. He had no success the first day, nor the second, nor the third, and meanwhile Harry made inquiries at the various shipping offices, ship brokers, and so forth, as to the whereabouts of the tramp steamer, Calliope. He learned nothing except what he already knew; namely, that the Calliope had put out from Rio de Janeiro for unknown ports. It looked very probable that Philip Ireton had either chartered the tramp or else had bribed her captain not to tell where she was sailing to. On the third day Harry learned that there was quite a cargo on board the Calliope consigned to Cape Town, South Africa; and he judged from this that she would probably put in there whatever was her final destination. But he could neither wire to Cape Town for the arrest of Philip Ireton or go there himself, since he was now absolutely without money, and Billy had had no success as yet. Even if he had had the means, he would not have dared to go to Rio de Janeiro to make closer inquiries, for there he would certainly have been arrested by one of the company's agents.

It was while he was in this strait and wondering how he would ever get out that Harry walked sadly up the street and came upon Billy standing in a shop doorway cooing soft Spanish to a female figure just within. Harry pretended not to recognize his friend, but he slowed up enough as he passed to observe that the girl to whom Billy was talking was not only young and pretty, but that she was beautifully and richly dressed, and that the shop she was standing in, and which was evidently her father's, looked to be in a very prosperous condition. As Harry passed by he heard the soft words, "Dulcecita, mia poquita," and many other loving epithets.

When he reached home after two hours more of wandering on the waterfront he found Billy rigged out once more in his woman's attire.

"Why, what on earth has happened, Billy?" he asked in alarm. "We're not being chased are we?"

"Far from it," replied Billy. "You may have heard me billing and cooing this afternoon in the door of that little boutique. Well, I was whispering soft Spanish nothings to as pretty a little Felicidad as you ever laid eyes on. Well, now, to make a long story short, her mother is very superstitious; also every night she walks with the fat, contented Papa in the plaza, while the dulcecita remains at home with her prayer-book. You don't see what that has to do with the togs of my starry-eyed Beatrice of blessed memory? Well, you are a dull one, sure enough. I shall dress as a gypsy fortune-teller. I shall waylay the old woman and tell her daughter's fortune even if I have to tell it for nothing. If you will only be strolling not far from the spot you may have the pleasure of hearing me and witnessing my cleverness."

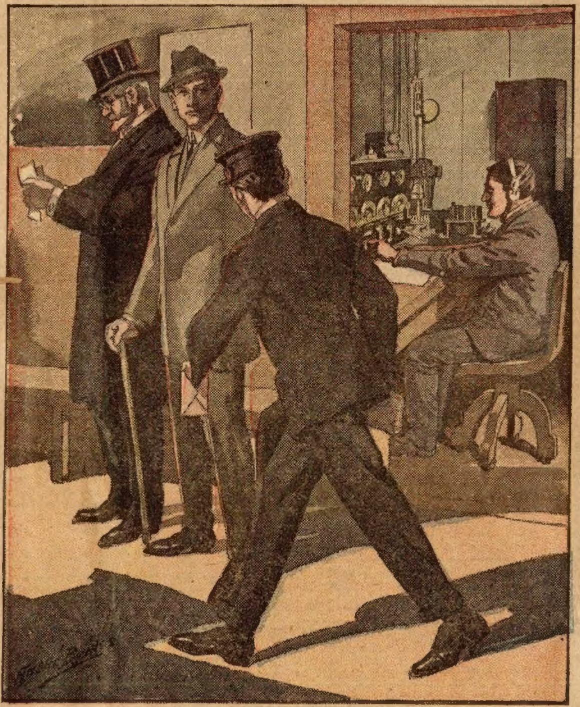
Again Harry enjoyed a good laugh in spite of his troubles. It was the second time he had laughed heartily since that fatal Sunday on Hurricane Point.

"I shall take pleasure in strolling about in the plaza tonight and witnessing your cleverness," said he. "If I am unfortunate in some ways, I am certainly lucky in having for my traveling companion a young person who is as clever and versatile as you are."

That night Harry and Billy approached the plaza from different directions, and when Harry arrived there he found Billy, in the guise of a fortune-teller, there before him. While he sat on a bench watching his companion from the corner of his eyes, he saw a fat Spanish couple approaching and saw the fortune-teller turn his steps so as to interrupt theirs.

"Excuse me, senora," said Billy in quaint, broken Spanish, "excuse me, but will you cross the palm of a poor wanderer from Little Egypt with a small coin, a penny will do, and I will tell the senora's fortune and the fortune of the little senorita at home with her prayer-book."

That "at home with her prayer-book" evidently convinced the Spanish lady that the fortune-teller was indeed possessed of occult power, for she at once handed the fortune-teller a small coin and asked that she tell her fortune and the fortune of the senorita at home.



"For Harold Haskell, Sr."

"I will tell the past, the present, and the future," said Billy. "You have at home a beautiful little daughter, seventeen years old last Whitsuntide. Her name is Inez, but she spells it Ynez. She is in love with an American named Billy Sangree and he is in love with her. Today he talked to her in the door of your little boutique and they plighted their troth, but Billy, the American, he go away very sad, for he have at present no money. That is in the past. In the present Inez, she sit at home and read the prayer-book and count the blessed beads and pray that Billy Sangree will get some money soon. That is the present; but in the future, when tomorrow comes Billy Sangree will come to your good husband and he will show him a letter signed by a great American named Harold Haskell of the firm of Haskell & Co., and he will ask that your good husband shall lend him five hundred pesos——"

"God forbid!" broke in the husband.

"Hush!" warned the wife, "listen to the fortune-teller."

"And your husband will lend Billy Sangree five hundred pesos," continued Billy. "Then the preparations for the marriage will begin, but suddenly you will learn by a telegram Billy Sangree is not Billy Sangree at all; he is Harold Haskell, Jr., a great American millionaire; and he called himself poor Billy Sangree and came asking to borrow just to test what kind of people his sweetheart's people are. If none of my words come true within twenty-four hours you needn't believe the rest that I have told. Now, senora, I have told you what will make you all rich, will you not give me a gold coin instead of this poor little copper coin, for my baby at the camp is sick and needs medicine."

And the credulous Spanish woman at once slipped a gold coin into the fortune-teller's hand.

"I feel like a thief to take this money," said Harry twenty-four hours later, when Billy Sangree returned with five hundred dollars in gold. "But I must wire to Cape Town and to Natal and other South African ports, and I must likewise sail to South Africa tomorrow while I have a chance. As for you, you must hold out enough to pay your passage back to New Orleans to your starry-eyed Beatrice, Ophelia, or whatever her name may be. You have been away from her too long already. And listen, Billy, when you get back there, get a priest at once and marry her."

Five days later Harry was in mid-Atlantic on his way to Cape Town and Billy Sangree halfway back to New Orleans, the happiest man on the high seas.

How the little Spanish family that kept the shop felt has never been recorded, but Harry had their address and he fully intended to make good the promise upon that scrap of paper.

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

❧ ❧ ❧

DIFFERENT

"There's one thing I'm firmly resolved on," said the girl with the fluffy hair. "I've been resolved on it ever since we became engaged! When we're married we simply shall not become horrid and prosaic like other married people!"

"Huh?" inquired the young man.

"I've always noticed it in them," went on the fluffy haired girl, "but I didn't think much about it till—till you came along! It seems perfectly dreadful to me that all the romance wears off the way it does!"

"Well!" exclaimed the young man firmly, "you'd better believe it isn't going to wear off in our case!"

"I'm so glad you understand," said the young woman. "Why, when I think of my married sister I could almost cry."

"What's the matter with her?" asked the young man in great concern. "No divorce or anything like that?"

"Worse," declared the fluffy haired girl. "It is just pathetic! Why, when Adeline was engaged to Harvey it was perfectly beautiful! Their conduct was just my ideal of how people should care for each other! You ought to have seen him look at her when she wasn't looking—as though she was something absolutely wonderful dropped down from Mars and he was frightened lest he lose her! When he brought her flowers it was like presenting a queen with the Kohinoor and his voice sounded like a matinee hero whenever he spoke to her! When he would say good night you'd think they were parting for a thousand years, and once he came way back from the station because he said he was afraid she would think his good-by kiss was careless and that he had wounded her feelings! If any one had a prospect of a perfectly beautiful married life it was Adeline! And when I visited her this spring——"

"What was the trouble?"

"Oh, they didn't throw the dishes," admitted the fluffy haired girl, "but I'd lots rather they had! Harvey would read the paper at breakfast and look at his watch and murmur that he had to rush. Then he'd roll up the paper, grab his hat and gloves and give Adeline a little dab on her forehead or ear and say, 'Good-by, old lady,' and dash out through the front door. I tried to act as though I didn't notice anything and Adeline made such a brave effort to cover it up. She would go singing around as though everything was all right.

"Once I asked her if she really was happy and she put on such a surprised look. She laughed right out and said she certainly was and what was I imagining? But I know! After his being such a beautiful lover, to degenerate into that! I think it is perfectly dreadful! And once—he went away and totally forgot to say good-by at all; If you ever——"

"Never!" declared the young man. "That was atrocious! What could he be thinking of?"

"Adeline explained that he had on a big business deal and she didn't mind at all, but I know that she was hiding her shattered romance from me! And, consider my own father and mother!"

"They always seem devoted to each other," protested the young man.

"Ye-e-s," admitted the young woman reluctantly. "I suppose you might call it that. Of course, I'd never mention it to any one outside the family, but sometimes I wonder whether father and mother really do care for each other! Why, they seem so interested in other things! Father sits and reads and mother fusses around the house and does other things, and when they talk it's about prosaic things, like expenses and college educations and the best tailor to go to and whether they'll put in the terrace at the country cottage this year and how about that new fertilizer the gardener wanted! It's awful! I——"

"Still," said the young man, "it would seem kind of funny, wouldn't it, for your father to spend the evening holding your mother's hand in the hammock and telling her he had dreamed of her last night and remarking on how beautiful were her eyelashes?"

The young woman giggled a little. Then she frowned.

"Anyway, it isn't right," she insisted. "I don't believe it's possible that they can care for each other—well, the way you and I do, for instance!"

"Oh, no, of course not!" agreed the young man instantly. "That wouldn't be possible!"

"It's awful the way they all seem to let it slip away," said the young woman. "Promise me that we'll never be like that—so commonplace!"

"Never!" said the young man. "As though you could ever grow commonplace to me! We'll be different!"

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Still Belonged.

A small, rather timid-looking man entered a newspaper office and approached the clerk.

"Are you the man who takes in society news?" he queried, with an appealing look.

"Yes, sir," cheerfully replied the young man at the desk. "I can take any kind of news. What have you got?"

"Why, it's just this way," said the caller, lowering his voice. "My wife gave a party last night. It was a brilliant affair, and I am willing to pay to have this report of it put in the paper."

"We don't charge anything for publishing society news," explained the clerk, at the same time taking the proffered manuscript, and looking it over.

"That's all right," was the reply. "You don't get me. I wrote this up myself, and I put in a line that says, 'Mr. Halfback assisted his distinguished wife in receiving the guests.' That's the way I want it to go in, and I don't care what the cost is, absolutely don't care what the cost is. I want my friends to know, by George, that I still belong to the family."

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Difficult.

A man was brought before the court upon the complaint of his wife, says the Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung. While the prisoner was testifying, the judge made it clear that he intended to be harsh with him; so his wife became frightened, and when called to the stand refused to give any testimony. In fact, she retracted all her accusations.

"So your husband didn't strike you, then?" said the judge. "Where did you get that black eye?"

"I struck it accidentally on the mantelpiece."

"So! And that piece bitten out of your ear—he didn't do that, either?"

"No, no, your honor. I did that myself!"

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It Was Old, Too.

A tourist, "doing" one of the many old inns of England, had ordered tea and a sandwich. The waiter was boring her with his tiresome descriptions of the historic connections of each piece of furniture, and the legends surrounding every article in the house.

"So everything in the house has a legend connected with it," she remarked, when he paused. "Well, do tell me about this quaint old ham sandwich."

LEIF THE BOLD

Or, FIRST IN AMERICA

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE THIEF.

IT WAS not hard to comprehend who had fired the arrows. In a break among the trees of the upper hill, tall, muscular men were to be seen—men swarthy in the extreme, with no suggestion of white in their faces.

"Oho!" exclaimed Ludwig, "so the new land has its crop of settlers already."

Another arrow came sailing through the air, and the doughty carpenter had to duck his head to avoid it.

"By the hammer of Thor!" he swore, "the knave nigh winged me. The chopping-ax fits not this moment, and with your leave, Leif, I will take sword and spear and go to chastise the varlets."

Leif had been quite as observant, and he was about to shout to his followers when there was a commotion on the upper hill. All of the dark-skinned men wheeled, took to their heels and disappeared among the trees.

"Scared away!" mocked the carpenter, "but why?"

"Sigurd, the Skald, is there."

It was so. The poet had entered the glade, but though he bore weapons none was drawn. Instead, empty-handed, he stared after the vanished men as if astonished.

Leif let no more time go to waste. Instead, he called to his own force and sent a dozen to investigate, and to fight, if there was need. While they hurried away he beckoned to Sigurd, who came willingly.

"What's to do up there?" the leader demanded.

"By the god Brage, I know not," said the poet, wiping his face unconsciously. "I was wandering above, seeking due inspiration for a stirring and truthful Edda of the new world, when I stepped into the open way and saw a dozen or more barbarians. Long, slender, muscular rascals they were, all naked above their waists, with skins the color of brown berries. Not black men, but dark, very dark. They had bows and arrows, and knives in their belts, and certainly they looked like Yotuns on foot."

"Spoke they?" asked Leif.

"Not they. At sight of me they turned hoof and ran like deer."

"Which was well for you, none of our comrades being near."

Sigurd drew himself up with offended dignity.

"I see not that. Am I not a warrior? Why, by Odin and Thor, I could have bested the full dozen of them with my bare hands had they stayed. They be naught but barbarians, while I—am I not a warrior?"

He was, and yet, while he ranked high as a poet, he had never been known to do a great deed at fighting. Except that he penned Eddas with cunning hand he would have been better fitted at the peaceful fireside of some Norse dwelling. Leif passed the boast by lightly.

"Men here before us," he mused aloud. "Well, it matters not, since they are wild barbarians. All lands have such."

"Said you not," Sigurd asked, "when we first sighted the coast, that perchance it was the far coast of India?"

"At first I had that idea, but not now."

"Yet it may be so. Those knaves were dusky-skinned like men I saw when with you in India. They may be of that race—let us call them Indians."

"As you will. Names will neither help nor hinder."

"Nor will these fellows do either. Some may pester us, but they cannot stand before our weapons. Why, I am not sure but I could scatter them alone by reading a choice Saga to them."

Leif did not hear. He was watching the higher hill, wondering if a fight would occur there. That day, however, he saw no more brown-skinned men, and when his scouting party returned they made the same report. Odd footprints they had seen, but the men had vanished into the thick woods. There was a little ripple later when Thorkel and his comrades returned. They, too, had seen a man, but only one, and he had fled before they were within a hundred yards of him.

"A fellow nearly naked he was," Thorkel added, "and sinewy as a muscle from Thor's own right arm. It seemed, too, that his skin was red of color."

"Red?" scoffed Sigurd. "Did you ever see a man whose skin was red? Nature never made one. You were within a hundred yards or thereabouts, but I was within five feet of my barbarians, and I do swear their color was a dusky brown. Men of red skin! Pah!"

"Their color matters not," Leif said tolerantly. "The main point is that we have found barbarians, and the fact that they fired upon us shows them hostile. We are safe from open attack when all together, but we shall do well to guard against shots from ambush."

"Ay," Sigurd agreed. "I am so sure of that, even now, I am ready to write an Edda affirming that the Indians are a dangerous, treacherous race. We have women here, and though they are wrapped in Regnar's web of wickedness, they deserve good advice. Pray let it be said to them that they should not go far away."

"Set Alger to herd them!" sneered Ludwig. "He is the lover of old Regnar's daughter."

Leif's wandering gaze chanced to discern Thora standing in conversation with Gunhild, her servant, but he gave her only the slightest attention. Another matter had occurred to him, a device for the general comfort, and he explained it to some of the party.

Then the brown-skinned men were forgotten.

During the day the work on the dwelling huts advanced well, but it was abandoned when twilight fell. Supper was eaten amid a general murmur of voices, for Leif was to be formally declared Earl of the new land soon after.

Two piles of wood had been formed, one on either side of the low flagstaff, and these were to be lighted before the ceremony and everything done in the strong blaze thus obtained.

By the time the eating was finished night had fully fallen, but the fires were delayed while Leif went in person to make sure the two ships were arranged to his taste. He did not intend that any man should deprive him of them. The warriors sauntered about, each one giving a word now and then to a comrade, meeting the delay as contentedly as possible.

"How is it, Sigurd, the Skald," asked Thorkel, "have you writ your lines with cunning words and figures of speech?"

"As well as in me lies," the poet replied. "It may be that I have reached some eloquence, too, for the subject is inspiring."

Some of the sturdy soldiers had a habit of bantering him, and they now collected to do their usual part.

"Ay," said Ludwig, "Leif Erikson is a subject fit to thrill even a weak writer, while as for Sigurd—well, we know his genius."

"Sigurd," added Thorkel, "doth commune with Brage, god of eloquence, and Tyr, god of courage and victory," and the stout speaker thrust a thumb secretly into the ribs of a fellow soldier.

"Also, with Freya, goddess of love," declared another comrade.

"I have heard many Eddas," supplemented Ulrik, "but never any more smooth and thrilling than our good Sigurd does write down."

"Peace, peace!" directed the poet. "Flattery mates ill with my spirit, for I am half warrior, you know."

"Once let Regnar's female cubs listen to your reading and you will either be a lover or a heart-breaker."

"The maidens are not laden with faults, but I will have them not. Love can be sung with safety, but it is a dangerous thing to practice on."

There was a laugh at this retort, and just then one of the Norsemen, shifting his position a trifle, thought he saw a crouched figure pass from behind one of the piles of wood and advance toward the waving banner. Deciding that the dusk of the spot deceived him, he gave it no further heed.

Other bantering speeches were flung at Sigurd, but as he was closely assailed with wit he grew suspicious, summoned his own ideas and flung back retort for retort. The whole group stood laughing merrily, for though warriors, they liked a jovial hour occasionally.

In the midst of this enjoyment Olaf came from the water with long steps.

"Leif Erikson advances," he said. "Light the beacons."

Now, Elif, thrall of the leader, had secretly ignited a torch and, hiding its flame, had been waiting. At the order he leaped up and the torch flared out in red brightness. The light fell on Norsemen and it fell on—a startling sight. Almost at one glance the warriors saw that the flag was gone from the staff, and then a slight, lithe figure flashed past their outskirts.

A brown Indian thief was running away with the banner.

CHAPTER V.

A MISSING MAN.

THE Norsemen were quick of wit and ready of action, and when they saw the flag trailing in the hands of the Indian they acted with celerity. Plunging along in pursuit, they did not doubt their ability to run the thief down promptly, for none then wore armor. The Indian was getting farther into the shadows with each flash of his nimble legs, but what of it? How could barbarian legs match Norse legs?

The question was quickly answered, for though they ran at top speed, the quarry began to grow dim before a hundred yards had been covered. Then a groan arose from among the pursuers. They saw that they were no fit rivals for the Indian, and bound to lose with ridiculous inferiority.

And the barbarian had the banner!

He was literally melting into the night when a single figure rose in his path. Thorkel had briefly moved away from his comrades, and he was the rock of safety for the flag.

Caught unawares, the thief was seized and flung down heavily, and as he fell Thorkel plucked the fabric from his loosened grasp. It was saved, but the Norseman also wanted the barbarian, and he clutched at him. His hand fell tight, but the unexpected happened.

The Indian writhed away deftly, gained his feet and again fled. Once more the darkness hugged him to its bosom. A half-dozen steps Thorkel took in pursuit, but in the meantime the runaway took a full dozen, and when the pursuer tripped and fell he willingly gave up.

The other warriors, joining him, raised a shout at sight of the recovered banner, but their blood was warm with anger.

"Let us all run after him and make him prisoner!" cried Ludwig.

"You?" scoffed Thorkel. "Why, you might as well chase the doe on old Glittertind. Had you ten legs each he would outrun you all. Ay, for his speed was so great that you seemed almost to stand still as he fled away from you."

No one answered, for second thought showed them that Thorkel was right. If they were marvels in battle, the barbarian was a phenomenon of speed.

"He has the build for it," said Sigurd, shaking his head. "Slight, yet sinewy, clean-limbed as a race horse and nimble as a sunbeam, he is made for running."

Soberly the party retraced their way to the despoiled flagstaff. It did not please them that they had been so near to complete disaster. They talked of how the Indian had been able to seize the flag, but it was agreed no magic had attended it. In the darkness he had stolen near and gained possession of the trophy, and only the lighting of Elif's torch had prevented a secret, successful retreat.

"Those heathen may prove a bad foe," said Thorkel gravely.

"Do not mind what they wish. They dare not attack us openly."

"By Odin!" muttered Elif, "I like not this affair. Methinks the mishap to the flag is an omen that it will not long fly in Leif's Land."

"Bah!" retorted Thorkel. "It will fly as long as wood grows and water runs. Where Leif Erikson plants his banner, there he stays."

"The flag!" suddenly exclaimed Elif. "Quick! Let not Leif know that disaster has come to it."

With this the thrall snatched it, and as he was deft-fingered he had it in its proper place before Leif arrived from the water. The torch had been cast down, but the thrall acted further, and presently the two beacons were alight with the banner between them.

The leader came, and then, as the red of the blaze drew force from the heart of the wood, all was ready for the ceremony.

It was not long. Leif stood under the fluttering banner, and when Thorkel and Biorn crossed swords above his head, Sigurd formally spoke the decree of the Norsemen. By solemn rite the leader was pronounced Earl of the new land, and the deed was done.

Royalty was added to Leif's older honors.

Shouting and clashing of weapons followed this eventful step, and of his party only the Earl was reposeful. Permitting his men to raise all the commotion they desired, he stood calm among them, and, being more attentive than they, he noticed Thora and Inger just beyond the group, looking on with curiosity.

It was nothing to him. What were they? Two girls, the young of Regnar, the Bear. Only two girls. Leif gave them no thought. Yet, thought was with them.

"Sister," said Inger softly, "is not this a chance to drop honey into the ear of Leif, the Bold? If you congratulate him on his honors, will not your peaceful war be well begun?"

"No, no!" Thora replied quickly. "Such words would be commonplace, and he knows there is no good will from the children of the Bear Viking."

"But your smile?"

"Smiles alone will not delude this stern warrior. Remember, he has but one vulnerable point. Smiles without allies would shrink back from his big eyes, which burn with indomitable will, but eye nor ear will detect the trap when his hobby is brought up for talk. When this Norse Achilles is stricken the arrow must be as well sped as ever Paris shot."

"True, true. As usual, you are right. It saddens me that I lack your farsightedness."

"Kitten, would you have all the rich gifts of this world?" murmured Thora. "You, too, are a heart-breaker, but your path is direct as a sun-ray. Does not our father sometimes call you Honeyheart?"

Silence fell between the sisters as they saw the group of Earl-makers begin to separate, and they went to rejoin Regnar.

That night Leif slept well. It was nothing to him that swords had been crossed above his head, except in that it made for the general good. It was much that a new world had been discovered, but he regarded the exploit as one in which every man of his party had equal honor.. Ambition and vanity found no fuel within him, and he rested peacefully.

Until mid-afternoon, the next day brought nothing more important than the keen song of the axes and the strain of riven wood, with the shelter huts taking form, but after a party of men sent to explore more remotely than before had been gone three hours one of them returned hastily and made a report to Leif that stirred that chieftain out of his usual calm.

As a result the messenger was told to guide him away from camp. The man led, and at last Leif stood in a little glade in the midst of gnarled but massive oak trees. Thorkel and four others had been waiting, looking down and considering.

At their feet a man lay dead.

He was, like the strangers before seen, a tall, sinewy fellow in life, gracefully proportioned, and, save for coarse features, comely. His only clothing consisted of a tanned deerskin waist-cloth and moccasins, though various ornaments on neck and wrists told of drawings from the natural equipment of animals and birds.

In his breast was an arrow, and its deadly work must have been practically instantaneous. He had gone from life to death at a single bound.

These things did not at first interest Leif. He had been summoned because of something else, and it was at this something he looked. The scalp of the ill-fated man had been cut loose and then wrenched away.

The Earl gazed long and intently, while his men preserved silence. Accustomed to violence and bloodshed, it was nothing to Leif that a human being lay dead, but the manner of that one strange thing impressed him deeply.

At last he lifted his head and questioned Thorkel with eye and lip.

"Was he dead when you found him?"

"Ay, my Earl," the warrior replied.

"And no one else near?"

"Not near here, though we have seen other of the barbarians—or Indians, as we call them. They seem to be numerous. We have seen huts, and a few of their crude arrows, together with odd things like hatchets. They seem a people that live by the chase, ignorant, ahimal-like and vicious. But—this—this——"

He pointed at the scalpless head and fell silent.

"A savage deed, in truth," Leif declared.

"Johan has ventured the surmise that all of them are crazed, but it seems to me there is system in their way."

"Who but madmen would rob a head of its covering?" demanded Johan.

"Each civilized people has its strange ways, and each spawn of barbarians, its horrors," the Earl reminded. "I have seen shocking men in my life, but never any who did a deed like this."

"It is worse than act of troll or yotan," said Thorkel.

"Wild beasts could not do worse," added Ulrik.

"There was no affectation in these comments. The Norsemen, living in a rough, warlike, pitiless age, had met with scenes of violent death in many forms; had witnessed comrades die in brutal butchery, and had themselves done ill deeds in battle, but there was something in this particular species of mutilation that shocked even them.

"It is a hideous thing to despoil a man's head of its covering," muttered Johan.

"And why?—why?" asked Thorkel. "It was the meaningless act of a beast that walked on two legs. Mere wanton vileness."

"Perhaps not without meaning," said Leif. "We do not know. Our ways are not the ways of these barbarians, but I grant you that it is the vilest deed I ever witnessed."

"If," reminded Ulrik, "it is their way of making war, what may not happen to us? Will they cut off solitary fellows of our number and despoil them in like manner?"

"By Odin and Thor!" muttered Thorkel, his voice a deep growl.

"If it happens there will be a deadly settlement," asserted Leif.

"Will that settlement bring our dead to life?" snapped the bold subaltern. "Will it hitch my scalp to my head if you afterwards slay him who butchered me?"

The Earl's eyes took on a gleam that boded ill to the barbarians, but Ulrik spoke hurriedly.

"I like it not that we all stand idle here. Sigurd, the Skald, has been absent from us a good hour. He wandered away to seek material for Saga and Edda, and is still missing. Has he met with the Indians?"

Leif instantly grew alert.

"Where left he you?"

"Half a mile over yonder."

"Divide into twos and search for him. Thorkel and Johan, go back to where he separated from you and try to track him. Ulrik, return to our quarters and bring ten more men. I will myself accompany the searchers. Woe to the barbarians if Sigurd is slain."

His orders were carried out promptly, and the hunt began. It was the custom to banter the poet freely, but he was loved by all, and no man save Leif would have been so much missed. Bitter hostility went with those who searched.

In the time that followed they saw more rude huts, and more scattered arrows and refuse, together with the remains of animals that had been killed and half-eaten, but no man came within their view.

Neither did they find Sigurd

It was dark when Leif returned to camp. He had been separated from his followers and met with no ill, but he had come back a gloomy leader. Danger and war and death were small things, but it made him writhe to think that any of his comrades should be robbed of their scalps as the unknown barbarian had been robbed.

Having arrived, he ordered that his followers light a great varder, or signal-fire, hoping that it would draw back the absent ones. As the blaze rose he started into the night.

"What," he muttered, "has befallen Sigurd?"

CHAPTER VI.

DANGER.

SOME of the lesser warriors had preceded Leif to the camp, and others followed until all were in. Nothing had been seen of the missing poet, and they were sitting in somber discussion, with the Earl in consultation with Biorn and others as to the next move, when they had a surprise.

Into the circle of light, erect, confident, high of head and even swaggering, came the lost Sigurd.

A general shout arose. There was a rush, the poet was seized, his hand shaken, his shoulders jovially thumped, his ears flattered with good words, and himself turned into a hero. This mood had to run its course, but the Earl was eager for information, and Sigurd gave it by the lofty-mounting varder.

"By the hammer of Thor!" he swore, "I have seen the heathen Indians at home."

"Where?"

"Ask me not, for I can only say, in the forest. It was thick and tangled, and no landmark had I then to quote to you now. I have seen the heathen do ungodly things, and I have come through their midst like one from a burning pit. It was nothing, for though I went out as poet, I stayed as a warrior."

He stroked his beard, well pleased with himself.

"The story, Sigurd, the story!" Leif ordered.

"You shall hear, my gracious Earl. Yes, I have seen them at home, but it was not in a Valhalla, nor yet was it blessed with Valkyrs."

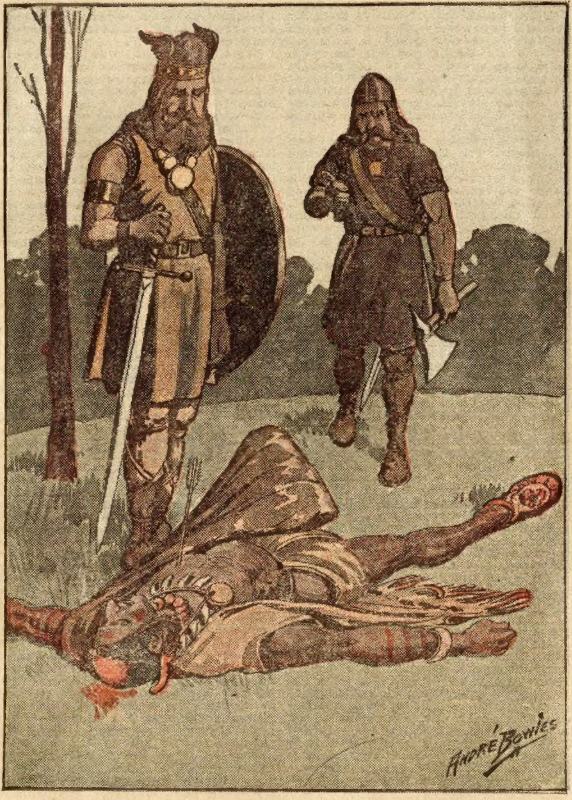
"Proceed!"

"Bearer of the Red Raven, it shall be done," was the pompous promise. "It is well that I am who I am, else you would never comprehend."

The poet wagged his bushy head, delaying because reluctant to part with the glory of the hour, but he suddenly caught the glitter in Leif's eyes that always mastered men. Then he found his tongue to more purpose.

"It was in this manner. I went forth to scan the trees, rocks and flowers of this strange land, thinking thereby to quicken the poetic fire and enable myself to pour forth an Edda that men would talk about a thousand years hence. Wrapped in the mantle of genius, I wandered a full three miles, I think, but then, very suddenly, came upon a most remarkable sight.

"In an open space in the forest were divers men of that singular tribe we have recognized as Indians, and they were behaving intemperately. They had cut a sapling off ten feet from the ground, and were dancing about it like imps from the ill-begotten regions; yea, like trolls, yotans and madmen welded in one. In their hands they held hatchets, and as they danced they hacked at the post until it cast off slivers and grew to be an object of hideous look. Nor was this all.



He was like the stranger before seen.

"One man among them held a thing I was long in recognizing, though finally I knew it for what it was. You will remember that all of the Indians wear long hair, save where it is cut away wholly. Well, there I saw the scalp of an Indian, cut from its place, and its then possessor swung it by the long hair and was the wildest of the dancers.

"Comrades, when I am not a poet I am a warrior, but I liked not that sight. Passion had those wild men in firm grasp. They had the faces of devils, and the manners of devils. I had the fancy to keep my own scalp on my head, and though my heart was a warrior heart and no craven blood trickled in my veins, it came to me that I had rather be in this camp, writing down an Edda, than among such heathen; but when I would have gone more men came, my return was made impossible without discovery, and—and——"

The poet's flow of language slackened, for Elif the thrall, had brought a savory supper and Sigurd's mouth watered for the taste of it.

"So—so," he hurriedly finished, "I had to stay right there for hours, only being able to slip away when night fell. Then I came back. The details you shall hear when I have eaten."

The coveted delay was not allowed, and while he ate he was freely questioned. He told, further, of the looks of the Indians, their fierce manner, their wild antics around the stake, their uncouth shouts, and their remarkable quickness, as well as of lesser things; and though, when asked as to his exact position among them, which was in a thicket where the slightest search would have revealed him—although he held to his boastful words, it was a fair surmise that Sigurd, the Skald, had been a badly frightened man until, at nightfall, they ceased their dancing and post-hacking and disappeared, giving him chance to beat a retreat.

The story left the Norsemen serious.

"We shall yet have to reckon with them!" exclaimed Olaf.

"There will be war," added Thorkel.

"And we must look sharp or we, too, shall part with our scalps," declared Ludwig.

"All you tell me seems to have a meaning," remarked Leif thoughtfully. "I venture the opinion that the taking of scalps is a part of their creed of war, and the hacking of the post must mean something, though I do not know what."

"Perhaps a celebration of the killing of the man we saw dead."

"Or," added the Earl, "maybe a declaration of war against us."

Precautions were taken that night to guard against attack from the Indians, but no alarm came. The next day the scouting parties covered more ground, going five miles in some directions, but the barbarians were not seen. Numerous evidences of their occupancy of the region were found, but if more of interest was there, it was not noted. At some points, however, the forest growth was such that men might well have been in safe hiding.

At the end of two more days the shelter huts had been finished. In the lack of boards they were mainly of riven wood, secured from the pine trees, with roofs of bark, grass and kindred substances.

That particular structure intended for Thora and Inger was made completely waterproof, aloft, by the addition of the sails of the Bear Viking's ship, which were battened down closely.

The more Leif saw of his new home the better he liked it. Stronger soil he had seen elsewhere, but, in many ways, it was a good threshold to a new world in which he intended to make remoter explorations later.

While the sun was dropping toward the horizon like a traveler with plenty of time, he was standing on the lower rise hard by these huts, looking at them and thinking of the future, when one of his followers, a few yards away, sent out the usual Norse expletive of "By Odin and Thor!" to free his mind of some idea.

"Did you hear?"

It was a soft voice close at hand, and Leif turned. Thora was there.

"Did I hear what?" he asked, face and voice impassive.

"You follow the new religion," she sweetly remarked.

"Ay."

"Yet one of your men swears by Odin and Thor.'

The Earl stroked his beard slowly, eying her closely but temperately.

"It is like this," he explained. "I have seen the light that clears men's minds and embraced the religion of the one true God, and have established it by decree among my people. But I wield no hard or cruel hand to enforce my wishes. Cruelty is contrary to my religion. I desire all my people to turn from heathenism, but I want to give them time to see, hear and think. Patience will conquer where haste would fail. I must admit that many of my best men are untouched by the new religion, thus far, but time will do wonders. Meanwhile, if they swear by the old gods I take no outward heed of it."

Something of persuasion and mildness crept into his voice as he spoke, and Thora had glimpse of an inner man she had not before seen. She liked the Earl the better for that explanation.

"Your way is wise," she admitted. "You say that your religion does not favor cruelty?'

"It does not favor it."

"I was taught by my mother, who believed in Odin and Thor, never to be cruel."

By this time Leif was paying strict attention. He had become wrapped up in his subject, and as he looked down at the girl and saw how sweetly serious she was, how full of seeming candor, how intent on his words, he warmed to his subject.

"Let me," he continued, "give you one illustration of the difference. In the old religion special happiness is reserved for warriors, and the conception of supreme bliss is to be received by Odin in his hall, Valhalla. After that comes the reward. And what is it? Each day the elect go forth to battle, one against the other, and they kill each other, but at nightfall they become again alive and all ride back to Valhalla together. That is the reward of the old religion."

He searched her face more intently. Grave, sweet, gracious, womanly eyes and face met his gaze, and there was nothing visible to check his flow of language.

"Yes," she said simply.

"The new religion has but one God, and He is supreme, just, sympathetic, a lover of peace. I do not yet learn that He debars righteous war, but his one great lesson is that all human beings feel kindly toward each other, remembering truth, justice, kindness, and good will in general. With the new religion the reward is not to kill one's fellow man, but to go to heaven and live forever in peace and joyful happiness."

"Injuring no man?"

"Injuring none."

"With no war in heaven?"

"None. Only peace and good will."

"This is new to me," said Thora truthfully.

"May the time come when it will be new to no man or woman but familiar to all, ay, even to the meanest thrall."

Earl Leif bared his massive head and ran the fingers of his free hand through his thick hair. Thora noticed that his brow was that of a man of high intelligence.

"Then this future is open to all?" she asked.

"Ay, to man, woman and child. Only the evil-doers are barred out. Unprovoked murder, theft, and other crimes, lead to everlasting death unless there is repentance in life."

"Peace for all the good!"

"Ay, for all."

Thora's gaze went to the Norseman's throat. She observed that it was a shapely throat, albeit bronzed and muscular. Leif, too, observed. He discovered the deeply attentive, pensive, studious expression on her face, and it came to his mind that it was a good deed to stir the thoughts in a darkened mind. Yes, it was well, even if she was but the young of Regnar the Bear.

"I wonder——"

Still pensive, she spoke in earnest, sweet and gentle intentness, but there was an interruption. Olaf came with hurried steps.

"Leif," he spoke forcefully, "you are wanted at once. Something strange and startling has been discovered, and it will not delay. You are wanted."

Instantly the Earl was again the warrior. He started, took a step away, sent his glance again at Thora, hesitated, and then, without a word, followed Olaf.

Inger joined her sister, her eyes shining with delight.

"I have heard," she said, smiling gaily.

Thora looked at her, grave for the moment, then reciprocated the smile with a satisfied air.

"Already," she murmured, "I have touched the weak point of this Norse Achilles."

"You will enslave him wholly, make him all weak, all foolish."

"It will not be at once, for, except in one way, he is a mountain of resolution, but as the mouse finds the niche, so I will burrow for victory. But what strange thing comes from the forest beyond him?"

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Poor Coffee.

Senator Stone of Missouri is a lover of coffee, and unless it is both strong and good, the waiter at restaurant or hotel soon hears from him. Recently he took a little trip to Baton Rouge and went into a restaurant for dinner. On raising his cup to his lips he made a wry face and then beckoned to the proprietor.

"What do you call this stuff?" he asked.

"Coffee," meekly replied the man, somewhat surprised.

"Coffee," repeated Stone, with scorn. "I could put a coffee bean into my mouth, dive into the Mississippi River from the end of this street, swim 'way up to Vicksburg, and I'll guarantee that any one could bail up much better coffee than this over the entire route!"

The Count's Revenge

Or, AN EYE FOR AN EYE

By Adrienne Roucolle

(Copyright 1914 by W. D. Boyce Co.)

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CHAPTER VIII.

BLACKMAILING.

AFTER his son's marriage and the departure of the bridal couple for the six-months' tour imposed by Count del Sarto, Monsieur de Beaufort had taken up his duties at the Palace of Justice with passionate ardor, wishing to drown by hard and ceaseless toil his ever-growing fears and misgivings, knowing well that the present calm was simply that which precedes the tempest. He did not know how or when the blow would fall, and he gave thanks that his son had been ordered away, as this assured him that Count del Sarto wished to spare the young man.

So in nervous anxiety he waited, burying himself in his work, which was unusually heavy that fall, as he had to prepare one murder case and two big robberies for the District Attorney. The men in all three cases were hardened criminals whom past experience with the merciless mills of justice of the French courts had made cautious and wise, and they were, therefore, hard to put through the third degree, which is one of the main attributes of the examining judge in a French tribunal. As the days passed and nothing came to disturb his calm, Monsieur de Beaufort began to breathe more easily, his fears subsided, and he ceased to start and turn pale every time he saw a stranger entering his office or heard the bell ring in his home. He knew that Count del Sarto had left Toulouse, and he was now beginning to wonder if his enemy had not given up the pursuit, contented with having estranged him from his son. This he knew to be a fact, since Hector's letters were formal and cold, evidently written through a sense of duty and not through any remnant of the love of the past. Monsieur de Beaufort suffered cruelly as he realized that the sin of his youth was taking from him the comfort and joy of his old age.

Thus passed the days. Then the blow fell, terrible, unexpected, and crushing, coming as it did from a quarter from which he had not once thought to expect danger. It was late one afternoon some three weeks after his son's departure that the bailiff came to announce to Monsieur de Beaufort that a strange woman wished to see him, refusing to give either her name or state the object of her visit. As Monsieur de Beaufort was then working up the case of a sensational murder committed in the slums of the city, he asked of the bailiff:

"What sort of a woman is she?"

"The kind that tries to look the lady but can't. She's dressed in the latest style, but without taste. Her voice is loud, her manner coarse."

"Evidently a woman of the underworld?"

"Exactly, Monsieur le Juge. If I'm not mistaken she's been drinking."

Monsieur de Beaufort thought a second, then said:

"Better admit her. I believe she's the woman I have been trying to find in the St. Martin's murder case."

The bailiff bowed and left the room, while Monsieur de Beaufort turned to his stenographer with the order:

"Be prepared to take down anything the woman says in answer to my questions, for I believe her to be the woman in the case."

The stenographer did not have time to answer, for Ottavia Rignago was entering the room. She cast her bold, shrewd eyes about her, taking in at a glance the rather somber furnishing of the office and the two men it contained. She advanced without hesitation to Monsieur de Beaufort, saying with an assurance that was almost insolent in its boldness:

"I want to see you alone, understand."

The voice was rasping and thick, the gestures vulgar, the walk undecided and coarse, showing that the bailiff was right when he had stated that the woman had been drinking. She was richly but flashily dressed with the clashing of colors and eccentricity of make affected by women of shady character. Monsieur de Beaufort saw all this at a glance, and more than ever was he convinced that she was the woman for whom he had been searching, and whom he had put the best detectives at work to locate. She held the key to the mystery, therefore he must not frighten her away. Not for a minute did he think that the vulgar creature before him, with the vice-marked face and drunken attitude, had any connection with Count del Sarto and his vengeance. In answer to her demand to see him alone, he said:

"The gentleman is only my stenographer and is sworn to secrecy. You can safely talk before him."

She laughed in derisive merriment, as taking a seat before Monsieur de Beaufort, she retorted:

" I don't think you would say that if you knew what I wanted to say," and she laughed again.

Still Monsieur de Beaufort did not understand; but he knew enough of human nature to guess from the way the woman had sat down and the stubborn expression in the narrow eyes, that she would not speak until the stenographer had been dismissed. Therefore he turned to the young man, saying at the same time as he gave him an expressive look which countermanded the order:

"Since the lady insists, you can leave us, Monsieur Lebrun."

The woman's sharp eye caught the look and she added as the young man walked to a side door:

"Never mind about leaving the door open, sonny, for before I say a word I'll see that that door is closed and that you are not listening behind as his honor has just ordered you to do."

This remark caused Monsieur de Beaufort to realize that he had to deal with a much shrewder woman than he had at first supposed. He saw that this first interview would have to be without witnesses, but he knew enough of his authority to realize that if she held any valuable secret he could have her arrested and that once in his power he could force her to talk before witnesses. He therefore ordered:

"Be sure you close the door, Lebrun, and take a seat at the farther end of the room, since Madame insists on speaking with me alone."

This time there were no farther orders given by the eye, and Lebrun understood that his chief meant for him to do just what he ordered aloud. The young man therefore left the room, closing the door behind him with a slam to show that it was well closed. Monsieur de Beaufort then turned to his visitor with the question:

"Now are you satisfied?"

"I suppose so," she sneeringly answered, with a shrug of the shoulders, "though to tell the truth, I insisted more for your sake than for mine, since, as you may no doubt have already guessed, you have more honor to lose than I."

"What do you mean?" The first note of anxiety came to De Beaufort's voice as he asked the question, though he was still in the dark as to the nature of the danger which suddenly he felt was menacing him.

The woman sat back in her chair and crossed her legs, leering at the man before her with a look which somehow chilled him to the heart. Then she laughed in jeering amusement as she said:

"You're a queer lot, all of you, to forget to take the mother into consideration when your son marries a girl whose mother is still living!"

His throat dry, a sudden terror striking his very soul, Monsieur de Beaufort asked hoarsely:

"Again, what do you mean?"

"Did not your son recently marry Francesca del Sarto, daughter of Andre de Narville and Ottavia Rignago, a courtesan of Rome?"

"Yes?" the word was a whispered question, full of anguish and dread.

"Did you get the mother's consent to the union as the laws of France demand?"

"I—thought she was——"

"In jail. So she was, but the sentence was not for life and she's out again and is now before you demanding to know by what right your son married her daughter without asking her consent."

Speaking, the woman had risen and now stood towering, menacing and formidable before the crushed and frenzied man. Here was something of which he had not thought, something more terrible than the revelation of his sin of the past, since were it told to the world, it would take from his son his last chance of happiness, as it chained him for life to the daughter of a woman of the streets, a felon and an outlaw, making them social outcasts! All at once the thought of the young man in the next room came to him. What if he had mistaken his order and was listening! With a cry that was almost a wail of rage, Monsieur de Beaufort sprang to the door and opened it violently. A sudden relief came over him as he saw the stenographer look up in startled surprise from the paper he was reading. In the intense joy of his relief, Monsieur de Beaufort broke out in a convulsive laughter, saying as his native shrewdness asserted itself and he felt that he must give an explanation for the abrupt opening of the door:

"The lady still refuses to talk, fearing you might be listening. As I believe what she has to say is important, I think, seeing that it is late in the afternoon, that I'd better dismiss you for the day. Report early tomorrow morning."

The young man, delighted with the half-holiday, did not notice his chief's pale, upset face. Taking his hat, he hurried away, fearing perhaps that Monsieur de Beaufort, whose excessive love of work made him a hard taskmaster, might change his mind. The minute they were alone and Monsieur de Beaufort had assured himself that no one was listening, he returned to Ottavia Rignago, who, sure of herself, had resumed her seat with the uttermost unconcern, the man's evident terror having showed her that Count del Sarto had told the truth when he had said she could have whatever she chose to demand once she had proved her claims as Francesca's mother.

"Do you mean to tell me that you are Francesca's mother?"

Swinging from side to side in mocking derision, a jeering smile on the thick, swollen lips, the woman answered:

"Sure, mon petit coeur, don't we look alike?"

"What proofs have you that you tell the truth?" De Beaufort's voice was becoming hoarser and more agonized with each question.

"My word," she laughed, then added with an evil smile, "and that of Count del Sarto, who is ready to swear that I tell the truth."

Monsieur de Beaufort fell back in his chair, this time completely crushed as he suddenly realized that the vile creature before him was working under the direction of his enemy. The blow he had been expecting had fallen and it was even worse than his most desperate fears, since it demanded his son's honor as well as his own, his son's last hope of happiness which might yet have been possible with the tender, gentle creature he had been forced to marry. Hoarsely he demanded:

"What are your plans? What do you want?"

"My plans are more simple than my wants," answered the woman evasively, "since with little trouble I could create the biggest scandal Toulouse ever had."

He leaped at her like a maddened animal at bay, his eyes wild, his breath panting:

"You'll not dare do that!"

Just a little frightened, Ottavia rose to her feet and backed to the outer door. Her fear left her as she realized that no matter what the man's desire might be, he would not dare harm her, and she asked, sneeringly:

"And who shall stop me?"

"I," answered the man, completely out of his head, "I'll kill you first!"

"Talk, my little sir, mere talk. What would you do with the body if you killed

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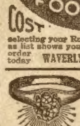

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me now? And if you wait until I get out of here, can you find me again before I have time to speak and tell my little story? Better return to your senses and let's talk this matter over calmly and see if there is no way in which we can come to an understanding."

"Ah, I see, it's a bargain you've come to offer," De Beaufort spoke with difficulty.

"Well, when one has something to sell, is it not necessary to inform the would-be customer that it is for sale?" answered the woman with bantering shamelessness which was more terrible than the most violent threats.

"Blackmail!" The word came from Monsieur de Beaufort as he suddenly understood Count del Sarto's Satanic plan. The forced marriage was simply a preparation for what was to follow. In his revenge, the Count was going to follow the old-time custom of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." He knew he could not rebel, for his son's last words, to save the family honor no matter what the cost, returned to him, causing him to ask the woman, "What is your price?"

"Now you're talking business," she replied as she resumed her seat, sure of success, "You must realize that the mother of Madame de Beaufort must live in a certain style befitting to her daughter's rank and——"

"You surely don't intend living in Toulouse?" The question was full of overpowering anxiety.

"Oh no. I prefer Paris, for which reason I must have a larger income, for living in the capital is higher than in the provinces."

Somewhat relieved by her announcement, though he knew he would be expected to give more money, he asked:

"How much do you think you will need?"

"I think 25,000 francs would keep me for a little while," she answered boldly.

Monsieur de Beaufort turned pale. The sum was large for the first demand, which he knew instinctively would be followed by many others. In a flash he saw himself ruined, yet he dared not refuse outright, asking:

"What if it would be impossible for me to obtain such a sum?"

"Then I would have to apply to my son-in-law for help. He has money in his own right I have been told, and I am sure he would find the sum for me."

"Enough! When do you want the money?"

"By the middle of next week," answered Ottavia, her eyes glittering with cupidity as she realized that the money was hers.

"I will make inquiries to find out if what you claim is true, and if it is, you shall have the money."

"Shall I come here for it?" Ottavia rose to her feet, smoothing out her bright red and black dress and straightening the exaggerated white hat with its drooping plumes

"Leave me your address and I shall bring it to you," answered Monsieur de Beaufort, realizing that the woman's presence at the Palace of Justice would soon be commented upon.

"Remember, no later than Thursday night."

"I shall not forget."

Ottavia Rignago bowed in her impertinent way and with a last scoffing look, which showed De Beaufort how sure she was of her hold upon him, she left the office. The minute the door closed behind the woman, Monsieur de Beaufort sank to his seat before the desk and remained long with his head in his hands, lost in his bitter thoughts of the haunted future he knew was now before him. As to the woman, as she walked away from the Palace of Justice she thought:

"How easy. Think that I never thought of that before. If it is so easy with that one would it not be equally easy with others! No harm to try." And she walked on, lost in dreams of future wealth.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOUBLE-EDGED TOOL.

On THURSDAY evening Monsieur de Beaufort brought the money demanded to Ottavia Rignago's hotel. The woman counted the bank notes over carefully, then with a smile of satisfaction said:

"That's all right. You're a good fellow and I see we'll get along first rate. I guess this will hold me for a few days."

Frightened by the veiled menace conveyed by these words, Monsieur de Beaufort said:

"Madame, I am not a millionaire, and if your demands become too frequent, I will not be able to meet them. The money I have just given you I had to borrow, so don't squander it away, as it will be harder the next time to get some more."

The woman laughed as she shrugged her shoulders, saying with heartless indifference:

"When you have no more your son will give me some of his. He could not refuse such little favor to his wife's mother, now could he?"

The dart took effect, for Monsieur de Beaufort hastened to reply:

"I forbid you to apply to my son. He must never know."

"Then behave and don't make such a face. You might as well be pleasant about it as not."

"When do you leave?" next asked De Beaufort anxiously.

"Oh, sometime tomorrow or maybe the day after. It all depends how I feel. I'm in no special hurry," and Ottavia looked at De Beaufort with insolent arrogance.

The look of conscious power in the woman's eye showed him he could do nothing but submit, so without further protests he took up his hat and walked to the door. Ottavia called him back.

"Say," she remarked in her vulgar way, "don't you go and play no dirt on me. You are connected with the police and you might try to have me nabbed and shipped off to Italy, where I have a rather shady record which a clever detective could change into a criminal one without having to stretch his imagination too far. Remember if I ever get in trouble, I'll call upon you to get me out, for we are now related through marriage, you know," and she laughed.

A white horror had overspread Monsieur de Beaufort's face. Here was a woman of vicious, nay criminal, instincts who would naturally get herself in trouble some day or other and from what she said she would expect him to help her out. In a sudden, illuminating vision he saw his future life forever haunted with the ceaseless dread of exposure, never at peace for a second, and he realized that Count del Sarto had chosen a terrible revenge. Thus with Ottavia's threat ringing in his ears, he left her, returning to his home crushed and broken.

From that night Monsieur de Beaufort was a changed man. He went about his duties at the tribunal in a dull, spiritless way, nervous, haggard, starting if spoken to suddenly, becoming pale as death every time the bailiff announced a visitor who did not give a card, trembling in dread when he opened a letter the handwriting of which was not familiar to him. Soon his actions were noticed by his friends and associates and anxious inquiries were made concerning his health, to which he would answer that he was a little under the weather, but that it was nothing serious. Everybody attributed the change to overwork. For five weeks he did not hear from Ottavia. He knew she had left for Paris the week after he had given her the money, but since then not a word. Then came another demand for money. She had gambled and lost and must have help immediately. Again he sent her what she asked.

Two weeks later came another call. She certainly was not fortunate at roulette. Besides, now that she was getting acquainted, life in Paris was becoming more expensive. Once more Monsieur de Beaufort went to the family notary for money. The old notary, who, like his father and grandfather before him, had been the legal adviser and friend of the De Beauforts since he had entered active business, gave a start of surprise at the new demand for money, remarking with that familiarity which years of faithful service gave him:

"Why, Monsieur de Beaufort, do you realize that this is the third loan in the last three months and that you now owe something like 50,000 francs, which, if we make the present loan, will bring the indebtedness to 75,000 francs?"

"I—I know," stammered De Beaufort half wildly, "but I—I must have the money, Danglade. You will get it for me, you must get it, do you hear?"

"If it is your urgent wish, Monsieur de Beaufort, I will do it, but I thought it my duty as friend and legal adviser to tell you——"

"I know and I thank you, Danglade, but I must have the money for tomorrow night."

"We will have to mortgage two or three of the farms in Normandy."

"Mortgage what you please. I must have the money," insisted Monsieur de Beaufort, and the old notary knew that the order had to be obeyed.

The money was sent Ottavia as the preceding times and for three weeks the unfortunate Monsieur de Beaufort was at peace. Then came another demand. The woman wished to take a trip to Monte Carlo and must have another 25,000 francs. This time Monsieur de Beaufort tried to rebel, writing in answer that it was impossible for him to raise that amount, as everything he had was mortgaged.

Four days later Ottavia was ringing the bell of the De Beaufort mansion, sending up her card with the request for an interview. Monsieur de Beaufort dared not refuse her admittance, knowing well what would happen if he did. The minute the servant who had admitted her left them, Ottavia, her hands on her hips, a hard look in the eyes, a sneer on the lips, planted herself before the old nobleman asking in tones full of menace:

"Now, will you tell me the meaning of your letter, Monsieur de Beaufort?"

Falling crushed upon his chair from which he had risen when the woman had entered the room, Monsieur de Beaufort answered:

"It means, madame, that I am nearly ruined!"

"So soon!" Consternation could be seen on the woman's face. Then it cleared as she looked around her at the rich furnishings of the room. "Bah, that's a lie! There must be the family plate, the jewels!"

"Those belong to my son," feebly protested Monsieur de Beaufort.

An evil expression stole over Ottavia's dissipated face as she said in harsh, merciless tones:

"Then I guess I'll have to write to him for help."

"You'll not do that!" broke from De Beaufort as he sprang at her, murder in his heart. A terrible thought had come to him. They were alone, the servants at this hour were in the office below. He had but to strike one sure, swift blow and this awful specter of his life would be no more. His bloodshot eyes must have betrayed his thoughts, for Ottavia looked toward the door for a second, uneasy to find herself alone with a desperate man. Her eyes caught sight of the call bell on the wall, almost within reach of her hand, and she was no longer afraid, answering with cold effrontery:

"Oh yes, I will, unless you give me what I want."

Monsieur de Beaufort leaped at her, no longer conscious of his acts, for a second made insane by the extent of his fear and despair. Ottavia extended her arm and pulled the silken cord of the call bell while she looked in the half-mad eyes with a fearless gaze which calmed his madness in a second:

"Better think up something to tell the servant I have summoned, Monsieur de Beaufort. He would think it funny if you did not give an explanation for the call."

Monsieur de Beaufort backed from her in horror as he suddenly realized what he was about to do. Hoarsely he cried:

"Never come here again!"

"I would not have to come if you had not refused my request. Give me what I ask for and I will not trouble you with my society."

"You shall have it day after tomorrow," answered Monsieur de Beaufort, his throat contracted, his eyes wild.

Jean entered at this moment and like the well-trained servant he was, did not seem to notice his master's agitation, merely bowing with his usual deference as he asked:

"Did Monsieur ring?"

"Yes," Monsieur de Beaufort managed to say. "Kindly conduct Madame to the door," and with a slight inclination of the head to Ottavia Rignago, he stood by while she followed Jean from the room, casting ere she left a last triumphant look at her victim.

Her interview with Monsieur de Beaufort and his first show of resistance gave Ottavia to understand that both his money and his patience were drawing to an end and that she would soon need to look elsewhere for supply of cash with which to indulge in her two vices—drink and gambling. Suddenly she thought of Count del Sarto! He had admitted he wanted revenge on the man she was pursuing and all this time she had been working for nothing when he should be paying her! Full of this new

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"I was so pleased with it that, after the meal was over, I bought a package to carry home with me, and had wife prepare some for the next meal. The whole family were so well pleased with it that we discontinued coffee and used Postum entirely.

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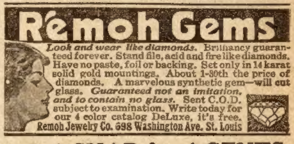

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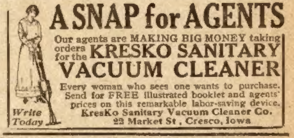

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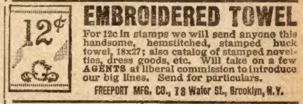

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thought she returned to her hotel and went to bed, spending the greater part of the night arranging her plans and figuring out her future course of action. The result of this was that the next afternoon she was sending up her card to Count del Sarto in the elegant bachelor apartment he had rented and where he lived alone with the faithful Guilio. Count del Sarto, who had just finished dressing prior to going out, was surprised as he read on the bit of cardboard handed him the name "Countess Ottavia Rignago." For a second he held it in his hand undecided whether to admit the woman or not. Then thinking she might have some information concerning Monsieur de Beaufort, he gave Guilio a nod of assent, and, drawing off the glove he had already started to put on, he stood and waited. Ottavia entered, more flashily dressed than ever, more brazen in her increasing degradation.

"Hello," she said on entering. "I see you were going out. Sorry to disturb you, but as I don't often come to Toulouse, I naturally wish to see my friends when I do come."

As she spoke, Ottavia took a seat, though Count del Sarto still remained standing, and from her chair she leered up at him with a look which seemed to reveal a hidden thought which for some reason made the Count uneasy. Abruptly he asked:

"May I know to what I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Sure you may. Sit down and be sociable like old times," she answered boldly.

Something in the woman's arrogant manner increased Count del Sarto's uneasiness, though outwardly he remained the same cold, self-possessed individual, saying with increasing hauteur:

"As you have already noticed, I was about to go when you sent up your card."

"Which means you are in a hurry to get rid of me, eh?" asked Ottavia with a smile, though her eyes narrowed in an angry look which gave them a dangerous glitter.

"I believe most people would understand it that way," answered the Count in his most frigid tones.

"All right then," retorted Ottavia with assumed good nature, "I will not beat about the bush any longer. I want 50,000 francs. The victim you gave me to fleece hasn't as much fleece as I thought he had and it takes him time to raise the money; and I am anxious to go to Monte Carlo and try my luck at a device to break the bank which my new friend has invented. See?" and she sat back in her chair with the assurance of one who is sure her request will not be refused.

In a flash Count del Sarto understood the double game the woman intended playing, he further saw he was caught in his own trap. With a word, Ottavia could destroy his well-laid vengeance and free his enemy of the reign of terror he wanted to ceaselessly hang over him until, driven by utter desperation, he ended the torture by killing himself as twenty years before his victim had done. Though all this flashed through his mind in the space of a second, his face did not change and he merely asked with well-feigned surprise:

"I fail to see why you should come to me for money. You have no claim upon me that I know of."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Ottavia in real amusement, "no claim, you say. Why, my dearly beloved friend, don't you realize that to help you out I am claiming rights which are not mine. I am lying every time I say that I am Francesca's mother! Don't you suppose your Monsieur de Beaufort would be willing to give me the greater part of his fortune for the proofs that his wife is neither your daughter nor mine?"

"He does not know of your existence."

"Maybe not now, but there is nothing to stop me from making myself known. My dear Count, you have taught me the way of making money without work and without risk. Be not angry if I have proved a very apt pupil. I know you cannot harm me, for you have need of me to finish ruining the man on whom, for some reason, you want revenge. I further know that my silence is worth more to you than the paltry 50,000 I am in need of just at present."

Count del Sarto was a man of prompt decision, his active brain could figure out in a second the pro and con of any proposition. He therefore saw that he must give in to the woman's demand. Monsieur de Beaufort would soon be completely ruined and with the end of his vengeance Ottavia's claims upon him would cease. He had personally interviewed the peasant woman and her husband who, Ottavia claimed, were the parents of Francesca, and they had both sworn to the truth of the woman's story. If they repeated to Monsieur de Beaufort what they had told him, all of his plans of revenge would come to naught. Ottavia must not speak. Sitting down abruptly, he drew his chair close to hers, asking as he did so:

"How much money have you gotten out of Monsieur de Beaufort so far?"

"About 75,000 francs, and day after tomorrow he is going to give me another 25,000," she answered compliantly, adding with an egotistical smile, "Oh, I am a spender, I am."

"If I give you the 50,000 francs you wish, will you see to it that Monsieur de Beaufort gives you another 100,000 francs within the next six weeks?"

"Has he that much to give?" asked Ottavia, her eyes opening wide with cupidity and joy combined.

"Yes, he has. But you must make your demands imperative enough to be obeyed. His son will return within three or four weeks and you must use his presence in the city as an added threat to make the father give in to your wishes."

"I understand."

"But will you do it?"

"Sure, I will. When am I to get the 50,000 from you?"

"When did you say Monsieur de Beaufort was to give you the 25,000?"

"Day after tomorrow?"

"Very well, the following day. I will give you my check for the 50,000."

He rose as he said this, then looking at her with a glance which somehow chilled her to the very soul, he added slowly, a pause between each word:

"Remember that, when I pay, I want full value for the money invested. You remarked a while ago that you were a spender. I wish you to know that I could be a killer if the occasion demanded it. It will be well for you to keep this in mind." Then pointing to the door, he added, "You can return day after tomorrow for your pay."

Somehow Ottavia found nothing to answer. Something in the flinty eye and unbending voice told her that though she had obtained what she had come to seek, he had in no way conquered. It was going to be a case of steel cutting steel with no possibility of telling which side would have the most resisting power.

Two days later Monsieur de Beaufort gave Ottavia the money promised. He sold some government bonds at a sacrifice, much to the horror of the family notary, who determined to write to the son if there came another demand for money from the father. He feared that Monsieur de Beaufort was losing his reason. The day following, Count del Sarto gave the woman the 50,000 francs she had demanded of him and with this small fortune in her possession, Ottavia, full of hope, went on to Monte Carlo to try the new device to break the bank, invented by the Parisian gambler with whom she was at present infatuated.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

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* * *

She Wondered.

"You will never be happy with him," said Polly.

"Why not?" asked Flossie. "Do you think we never have any squabbles?"

"No troubles that anybody ever heard of."

"We don't advertise. And a squabble doesn't necessarily call for the emergency squad and the ambulance. There are genteel squabbles."

"Indeed?"

"You should have been here last evening! I had a couple of those nifty, classy little kiss-me-quick curls stuck away down on my cheeks, and when he saw them he said: 'My mother never used to wear curls like that. I'll show you her picture some day. She had a row of what were called beau catchers across her forehead.

"'Sure enough,' said I, a little miffed.

"'Yes,' said he, 'and she never wore her hair down over her ears; she parted it down the middle and smoothed it straight back, when she was not dressed up, and twisted it up into a sort of little doughnut in the back.'"

"The nerve of him!"

"That's what I thought! Then he talked about my V-collar—his mother had never worn a collar like that. And he commented on everything I had on. Even my fudge wasn't like the fudge his mother made, and that was the last straw!"

"Oh, you didn't break your engagement! Tell me about it!"

"I got his hat and handed it to him and told him I was good and tired of him and the superior way his mother did things, and he'd better take his bonnet and run home. He tried to say something and I wouldn't listen. I ran upstairs to my room and cried my eyes out, nearly."

"I don't blame you."

"And then when my cry was all over and it was about 11:30, I remembered that I had not put out the milk bottle. That is my work, so I went and did it. And I almost screamed when I opened the door!"

"You don't mean——"

"I do, too. There was a blurry shape sitting on the top step, and when I opened the door a husky voice said: 'Flossie!' You could have knocked me over! Of course I asked him what he meant by hanging around our steps in that fashion. And he explained that he was wating to see me. And he explained that he was not criticising the way I wore my clothes or the way I did things. He made these comparisons just to show me how much better I did things than any one else did that he knew."

"Well, I declare! And you kissed and made up! Don't you wonder whether he was telling the truth?"

"He kissed, and I made up. No, indeed; I am too busy wondering if he would have sat there all night if I had not opened the door."

* * *

Cutting It.

"I will take your novel," announced the heartless publisher, "if you will cut it down by half."

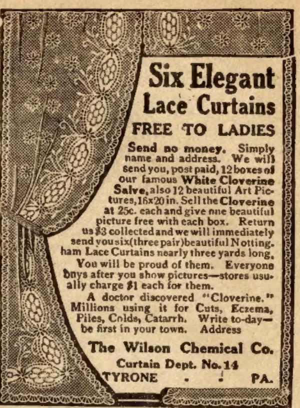
The budding Hall Caine cast up his hands.

"Cut it?" he cried. "Impossible! Every word is vital!"

"Indeed?" replied the publisher. "Just listen to this passage: 'Outside, the wind moaned unceasingly, its voice now that of a child which sobs within itself in the night, now that of a woman who suffers great pain alone, as women have suffered since life began. And, mingled with the wailing of the wind, rain fell—fell heavily, intermittently, like tears wrung from souls of strong men.'"

"Well?" said the author.

"Well," retorted the publisher, "why not say it was raining?"



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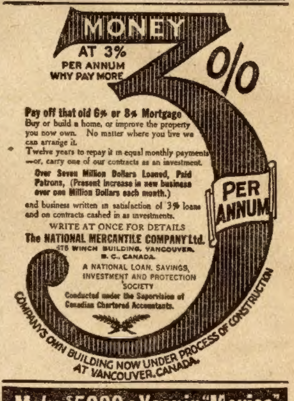

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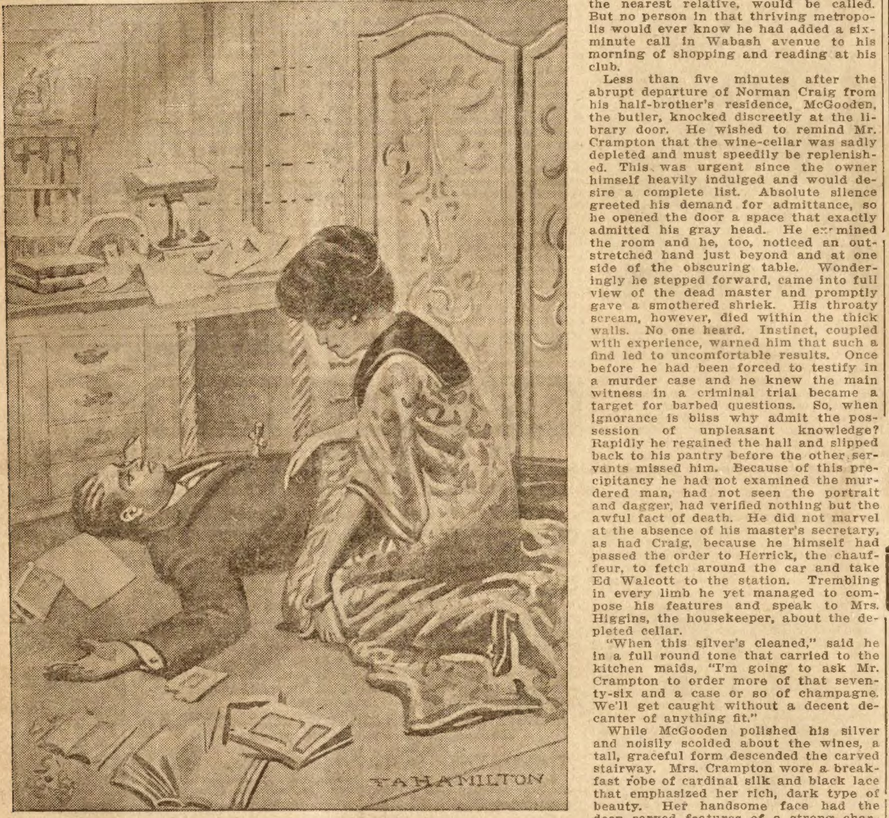
WINNOWING THE CHAFF

By MASON RAY

ABOUT ten o'clock of a gusty, rain-washed morning, Norman Craig, well protected by a dark-green ulster and gray felt hat, walked at a smart pace eastward on Wabash avenue. On either side of the wide street were handsome stone and brick dwellings, prefaced by mist-bedewed grass plats, shaded by outreaching maples, and wrapped in an air of secluded elegance. To emphasize this dignified aloofness the street was deserted. For all Craig could see of humanity he might be pacing the highway of a deserted village. With soundless, rubber-shod feet, the wayfarer mounted the iron-railed steps of No. 3507 and touched the button which was supposed to ring a bell. Hearing no response he tried the door and, to his surprise, found it unfastened. Immediately he stepped into an oak-paneled hall, turned without hesitation to the left and entered a somewhat isolated room he knew to be the library. Opposite the entrance was an ornamental brick fireplace where the wood had burned down to smoldering coals. In front of this were huge easy-chairs and on either hand were couches upholstered in dark green to harmonize with the deep-piled, grass-green floor cover. A glass-fronted cabinet of curios occupied a space at his left where he stood inside the door and a deep-tufted couch crossed the corner at his right. Along the side walls where none of the heavily-draped windows interfered were bookcases snugly filled. And in the foreground stood a large library table with immense carved legs, the baize cover of which was littered with papers and the bulk of which obscured the view. Yet just beyond one of the great, carved claws that finished the legs, Craig's glance observed a human hand. Amazed, he advanced until the table was removed from his line of vision and then a gasp of horror burst from his white lips; for, prone on the green plush of the carpet lay the man he was there to interview! The blond, middle-aged face looked ceilingward framed in disheveled, ripe-wheat-colored hair; the left arm extended close to the side where the death instrument still protruded; the right arm was outflung and the right hand—the one Craig had glimpsed—was palm up.

"Richard Crampton dead—murdered! My God, what's the meaning of this?" formed in Craig's brain, but no sound left his stiffened lips. He moved nearer, stooped to see if life remained and saw a significant object. Pinned to the dead man's body by the needle-sharp dagger whose bronze handle formed a cross, was the card photograph of a handsome woman!



She forced herself to study the evidence before her.

"Looks as if Dick met his Nemesis," thought Craig. "Or it may be the dust-throwing claptrap of a frightened thug." He glanced toward the safe that stood in a corner by the door but it was closed and seemed intact.

Craig's next thought was for himself. What if he were discovered there with the corpse of his half-brother? They were known to be enemies. Police would collect every scrap of their ten-year bickering over property matters and weave a fine web of circumstantial evidence. At that moment two men at his club knew he meant, that day, to make a last appeal for a share of his step-father's undivided fortune. So he expeditiously retreated from the house of death. A momentary fear that one of the servants or his sister-in-law might see him, made him weak with apprehension; but in the deserted street conscience flayed him for not having remained to assist and care for Edith Crampton, the widow, who was yet unconscious of her loss. Loss! The word rang in his mind. Would she consider Crampton's death a calamity? Dick certainly had made life irksome for his high-strung, handsome wife. She might well rejoice at liberty.

With his soft felt hat pulled low and his head bent as if to ward off the mist, Craig retraced his way, hastening to establish an iron-clad alibi. At the first business street he hailed a cab and instructed the driver to stop at Nordheim's department store. At that place he dismissed the conveyance and visited the gent's furnishing store where he painstakingly selected a worth-while supply.

"Send this to my rooms at 1084 Stone Terrace," he told the clerk. Then paid for his goods and departed.

In the reading-room of the club he opened the morning paper before his face, and, thus screened, gave himself over to intense reflection. "Who," he asked himself, "had killed Richard Crampton and why? Where were the members of the household, that no alarm had been given? Especially where was Edward Walcott, the secretary, who usually assisted Crampton in that very room?" Vainly he studied the tragedy and waited for a summons to the house of death. Before long some one would chance upon the grewsome scene and he, the nearest relative, would be called. But no person in that thriving metropolis would ever know he had added a six-minute call in Wabash avenue to his morning of shopping and reading at his club.

Less than five minutes after the abrupt departure of Norman Craig from his half-brother's residence, McGooden, the butler, knocked discreetly at the library door. He wished to remind Mr. Crampton that the wine-cellar was sadly depleted and must speedily be replenished. This was urgent since the owner himself heavily indulged and would desire a complete list. Absolute silence greeted his demand for admittance, so he opened the door a space that exactly admitted his gray head. He examined the room and he, too, noticed an outstretched hand just beyond and at one side of the obscuring table. Wonderingly he stepped forward, came into full view of the dead master and promptly gave a smothered shriek. His throaty scream, however, died within the thick walls. No one heard. Instinct, coupled with experience, warned him that such a find led to uncomfortable results. Once before he had been forced to testify in a murder case and he knew the main witness in a criminal trial became a target for barbed questions. So, when ignorance is bliss why admit the possession of unpleasant knowledge? Rapidly he regained the hall and slipped back to his pantry before the other servants missed him. Because of this precipitancy he had not examined the murdered man, had not seen the portrait and dagger, had verified nothing but the awful fact of death. He did not marvel at the absence of his master's secretary, as had Craig, because he himself had passed the order to Herrick, the chauffeur, to fetch around the car and take Ed Walcott to the station. Trembling in every limb he yet managed to compose his features and speak to Mrs. Higgins, the housekeeper, about the depleted cellar.

"When this silver's cleaned," said he in a full round tone that carried to the kitchen maids, "I'm going to ask Mr. Crampton to order more of that seventy-six and a case or so of champagne. We'll get caught without a decent decanter of anything fit."

While McGooden polished his silver and noisily scolded about the wines, a tall, graceful form descended the carved stairway. Mrs. Crampton wore a breakfast robe of cardinal silk and black lace that emphasized her rich, dark type of beauty. Her handsome face had the deep carved features of a strong character and her complexion was the clear olive that accompanies intensely black hair and eyes. Dainty slippers of cardinal velvet showed as she stepped to each lower rest until finally she reached the reception-hall and stood a moment, hesitant. Amid her surroundings of polished oak, she appeared like a historical figure of some oldtime royal court instead of a twentieth century society woman with suffragette tendencies. Slowly she moved towards the library door. Her perfectly shaped hand circled the bronze knob, turned it and she entered. Like the other two she stopped beyond the threshold and glanced about the apparently vacant apartment with its dying embers in the grate and the littered table. Then her

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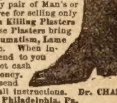
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alert eyes saw the upturned palm. Like a flash she was at the spot, knelt at the dead man's side, with one white hand tested his arteries for the life throb. Not a sound escaped her blanched lips. Every drop of blood receded from the olive skin, leaving her marble-white. Yet, almost fainting, she forced herself to study the evidence before her. For a long time she gazed at the torn portrait, but the face was unknown. She wondered if that woman had accomplished what she had longed to do and never dared. This theory she rejected. No one would so foolishly label their crime. The dagger, she knew, was one of a collection of foreign weapons and must have been taken from a cabinet that stood near the safe. After a time she rose to her feet. With ghastly face and burning eyes she stared down at the body of the man she hated. She appeared half-paralyzed by the shock of finding the thing done she had dreamed often of doing. But back of the gray mask her brain worked with keen precision.

"I'll be accused of the murder," she reasoned. "And it will be just, for in my heart I'm a murderess."

Like a swiftly passing flame she left the hideous room, softly closed the door and gained her private apartments, where she threw herself face down on a divan to shut out the dread vision and formulate plans for her later conduct.

After all it was the parlormaid with broom and dusting cloth who discovered the murder and made it known to the world by screaming her entire way back to the kitchen. McGooden, for a wonder, understood her incoherences and promptly phoned for the police. He interpreted to them Maggie's frenzied statements and urged them to hasten. It was a murder of unusual interest, therefore only seven minutes elapsed before the motorcycle of a detective was at the curb in front and an automobile with two other officers followed within a block.

"Where is he?" Quinn, the consumptive-looking detective, asked of the butler.

McGooden led the way and pointed a trembling finger at the dead.

"Has anything been disturbed?"

"No sir," McGooden told him.

"Relatives been notified?"

"There's nobody to notify except his brother and poor Mrs. Crampton," the butler explained.

Just then the auto-police came into the room guided by the open door. One, named Jonker, was florid, while Hicks, his assistant, was squat and dark.

"You see," Quinn told them with a nod at the corpse, "he's been dead some time. Doc Powers'll size it up."

"Who's in the house?" asked Jonker.

If he had turned his head the question would have been needless, for every servant on the premises clustered behind him; and, pushing her way among them was a black-haired woman in cardinal silk who rushed forward to the front, caught sight of the dead, then, with a piercing scream, fell prone to the grass-green carpet.

"This," said Hicks, "is a bad business." He helped Mrs. Higgins to lift the incongruously clad form to a couch at the left of the fireplace. "Somebody should have held her back. Where's her maid?"

"Held nothing," grunted Herrick, the chauffeur. "Might's well try to hold a panther cat." That he had tried was evidenced by a fragment of lace he held between thumb and finger and which he stared at with an expression of stunned surprise.

"Marie's down town," the housekeeper told Hicks. "Madam intended to attend the Van Duester ball tonight. Her maid wanted something for Madam's toilet. She's been gone two hours."

Quinn was at the hall 'phone. With McGooden's aid he located Craig at his club. When Craig answered the call his voice sounded much surprised and dismayed at the tidings communicated to him. He agreed to be on the spot within twenty minutes. Next Quinn talked with the coroner and those who listened to the one-sided conversation knew that an inquest was set for two o'clock that afternoon. The detective likewise rang up headquarters and directed a rapid fire of directions at his confreres that was unintelligible to the bystanders. As he hung up the receiver a slim, alert-eyed man entered the hall carrying a relief kit.

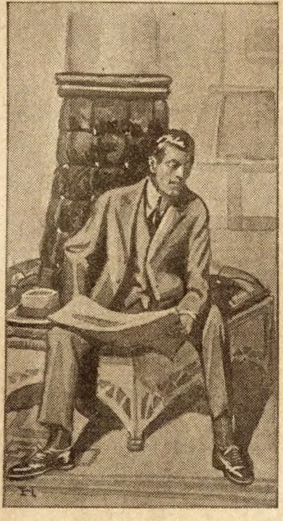
"In there, Doc," said Quinn in response to the physician's questioning glance. "We want you to revive the living and tell us exactly how long the dead one has been dead." Then to the lingering servants he directed:

"Back to your duties. But at two o'clock we want every one of you on the spot." His eyes menaced and his inference was clear. If one chanced to be missing, justice would bring him back. The black finger of suspicion would point him out as having guilty knowledge of the master's murder.

A procession passed up the stairway—Mrs. Higgins led, the two policemen carrying Mrs. Crampton followed, and Dr. Rockwell brought up the rear. Presently Mrs. Higgins' voice was heard saying:

"This is her room. Put her on the couch, poor lady. My, my, but that was an awful shock. For the life o' me I don't see who could have done it."

Less than an hour after the speedily-arranged inquest was in session she was enlightened. Not only did she see who could have "done it," but her vision became multiple. This singular redundancy of sight was due to Quinn's intermediate activity and to his sixth sense. More than one man on the force was willing to swear that this officer smelt out essential facts during his search for criminals. They stated that the detective's inner sight was of the X-ray brand and that his glance pierced walls and hearts and minds. Quinn, however, attributed his success to observation and a study of trifling details.



"Who?" he asked himself.

At twelve minutes to eleven—one hour after Craig's call at his brother's residence—the detective placed the library with its dead in the care of Jonker and Hicks with emphatic directions that no one was to enter the room or leave the house or disturb the corpse. In the oak-paneled hall he paused again at the telephone to confer with the police station. After securing his number he began to ask questions at high-pressure speed. Thus he learned that the dragnet of extra men and telegrams had enmeshed several facts of interest. It was found that Edward Walcott had visited Hoopersville precisely as he had stated was his intention. Because of his mother's recent death he was settling some neglected business. A Hoopersville officer had easily induced him to return on the eleven o'clock train in time for the inquest. As a mere precaution against accident the officer accompanied him. Added to this information Mrs. Crampton's maid had been located down town and shadowed. She was now on her way home in a taxi. Indeed, as Quinn hung up the receiver, a dark eyed, petite woman in dressy coat and hat passed him quickly and mounted the stairway. He instantly knew her to be the maid. Moreover, he knew the man who was just then entering the front door. It was Norman Craig and he eyed the newcomer sharply, for Craig wore an ulster of Oxford gray whereas he had just been informed that the gentleman was clad in green!

Without giving the dead man's brother an opportunity to speak, Quinn ran down the stone steps and mounted his wheel. At furious speed he darted for the station. And, when once within, he brushed the desk sergeant away from the 'phone and peremptorily called up central. Then, for an hour, he thumbed a directory while he talked with every resident on a certain section of Wabash avenue. Ultimately he chanced upon a servant girl who confirmed the thing he knew to be a fact.

When the Crampton hall clock indicated the hour of two, six hastily summoned jurors occupied chairs in the big library. Ample time had passed for them to examine the murdered man and the room and now Richard Crampton was decently laid out and covered from sight and witnesses were answering questions asked by Phineas Groat, the coroner, or Quinn, who assisted by permission. The house servants were soon disposed of. Not one of them could relate anything of value except the parlormaid, who was ill and McGooden, who told of the maid's discovery.

"Was this your first knowledge of the crime?" asked Groat.

"It was," said the butler with strong accent.

"And yet," Quinn told the coroner with equal emphasis, "this man went to the library and saw his murdered master just before he cleaned the household silver."

McGooden whitened to the hue of chalk. His wide jaw dropped. His dim eyes filled with horror.

"Is this true?" the coroner asked with sharp accent.

McGooden was trapped. He did not know how much was knowledge and exactly what was guesswork. "I—don't understand," he stuttered, "but I did happen to pass that way. Who told you?" he demanded of Quinn.

"You did," the detective told him. "In your anxiety to impress me with that silver-cleaning alibi I read the truth. Over a quarter-hour passed before Maggie raised the alarm."

"I'm innocent," cried McGooden with trembling lips. "What for 'u'd I kill the master?"

"No one's accusing you," Coroner Groat told him. "But a good motive would hang you."

He dismissed the butler despite his belated anxiety to talk and asked for the secretary. Hicks, who sat close to the library door, went to summon him. Jonker, stationed in the hall to ward off newspaper men who might scent the case at any moment and were not wanted, told the policeman Walcott waited in the parlor. When this witness confronted the coroner, the jurors saw a fair-haired, pallid young man who gave his age as twenty-two. His large gray eyes were clear as summer pools, his gaze was direct and his answers were succinct. He claimed Hoopersville as his home town and stated that Mr. Crampton had given him the day to settle up his lately deceased mother's small estate. Anyway it happened to be a slack Thursday. His employer had finished dictating a book of travels he intended to have published. There remained only a few business letters to be written. These were finished by nine o'clock and were left for Mr. Crampton to sign and dispatch. Mr. Crampton, himself, had ordered the chauffeur, Herrick, to drive him to the train.

During protracted testimony the pale secretary swore that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, nothing in the room or safe had been tampered with. He told them that the papers found on the table were the unsigned letters and the book manuscript. He was shown the dagger and explained that it belonged in the curio cabinet on the west wall. He barely glanced at the punctured photograph.

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"I never saw any one in the least like that," said he with emphasis.

Temporarily Coroner Groat excused him, but later he was to be recalled. The jurors were to be told more of Crampton's business deals. Norman Craig was then summoned from his sister-in-law's presence; since his encounter with Quinn at the hall door he had devoted himself to his prostrated relative. Now as he accepted the witness' chair he appeared moderately downcast but able to give detailed evidence in a clear voice. He named his years at the advanced figure of fifty-five, although careful grooming clipped ten years from the number. His widowed mother had married the senior Richard Crampton while he was a mere infant. When he was four years of age his half-brother was born and named for the father.

He knew nothing whatever about the original of the mutilated likeness and his words carried conviction. But he recognized the dagger as being one of his brother's collection. His brother had a craze for foreign weapons. He'd often thought the lot would prove far too handy if a thug happened to be cornered. Evidently the murderer had selected a silent death for his victim. He then told of Quinn's message to him at the club and his prompt response.

"It was shocking news," said he. "I could hardly believe it."

"And yet," said Quinn in staccato accents, "Mr. Craig was here in this room at ten o'clock."

"Me!" cried Craig. "You must be mad."

"Neither mad nor dreaming," the detective assured him. "Kate Dunn, chambermaid in the dwelling opposite, saw you enter this house at ten according to a timepiece on her mistress' dresser when she was making the bed. You wore a dark-green ulster and soft, felt hat. These garments were found by our men in your wardrobe after you shifted into that gray outfit on your way here."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Craig. "Suppose I chanced in, thinking to stop, and left at once because I remembered an errand? And suppose, after I learned of the murder, I decided not to mention the call? What's wrong about that?" he bluffed.

"This," said the detective: "It's common knowledge that you hated Crampton. His father left his fortune to his son intact with instructions to give you, his stepson, exactly what he deemed necessary. It chanced that you and he bitterly differed concerning the amount. Today you intended to make a last appeal. You found Crampton alone in the library. You probably quarreled with him, then killed him. Much may happen in five minutes. You had the opportunity and the motive. How will you disprove the deed?"

Craig's complacency fell from him like a blanket.

"I never raised my hand against Richard!" cried he.

"Time will tell," Quinn insisted without mercy. "Just now you're not on trial."

The once spruce clubman left the stand with drooping shoulders. As he passed from the room he looked his full age—and more. Marie, Mrs. Crampton's maid, succeeded him.

"We know all about your downtown errand," Coroner Groat told her. "But we want you to corroborate."

"Indeed!" cried Marie.

"Plain-clothes men know that you pawned twenty-five hundred dollars' worth of jewels for Mrs. Crampton. Is that right?"

The petite French woman stared at him as if she saw a wizard.

"Mon Dieu!" she ejeculated. Her sloe-black eyes shot angry sparks. "If you know my business," she snapped, "why ask?"

"Very well," said the coroner, accepting her half admission, "now about those railway tickets. Didn't you buy, for yourself and Mrs. Crampton, tickets to New York?"

Marie gave the questioner a glance that should have shriveled up his being. Instantly her hand sought a secret place in her bodice and her answer was two railway pasteboards which she flung on the coroner's table.

"Ce monde est plein de fous!" she cried and left the stand.

She was not recalled. At that moment Mrs. Higgins appeared at the door and intimated by a nod that her mistress now felt able to appear before the jury. Marie had surrendered the evidence wanted so Mrs. Crampton was given her place.

When the widow entered the room no one would have recognized the brilliantly beautiful creature in cardinal silk who had twice before that morning passed through the library door. Just now she was a study in ebony. Her gown was of black—soft, trailing black of dull, rich weave. The plain, black collar rose stiffly about her throat and met the low coil of raven-wing hair so that, from the crown of her head to the black-shod feet, she showed no other color save the wax-white face and shapely hands. Even the large, heavily-lashed eyes were like dead coals in a marble statue. The waiting jury gazed at her with sympathy and each man heartily desired that her ordeal be made brief.

She told the coroner in her low, cultured tones that she was thirty-four years of age and had been married five years. Her childhood home was in New York, a place she designed visiting at once. She could give no explanation of the murder. She had noticed a group of servants about the library door while passing across the upper hall. She guessed that something was wrong; and then an excited word or two, faintly heard, suggested the truth. Immediately she had descended the stairs and forced her way into the room. On the floor she then saw her husband's body. Had fainted and knew nothing more until revived by the physician nearly an hour later.

Detective Quinn, at this point, nodded in confirmation.

"That was superb acting," praised he. "I never witnessed anything better."

Mrs. Crampton turned burning eyes toward the speaker.

"You never excelled that on the stage," he assured her and addressed her direct as if they were alone in the tasteful reading-room. "And when you played the leading part as Marion Wier in "The Midnight Bells" you know all New York went mad. Odd thing, too," said he, "but that play had a scene parallel to the one you acted this morning. Remember? You had to thrust aside a mob and enter a room where the hero lay dead. Then, when you glimpsed the corpse, your cue was to flop full-length in a deep swoon. Thanks to seeing that drama in a New York theater six years ago, while I hunted a criminal, I tumbled to the act. But for that and Dr. Rockwell's detecting your fake swoon, you'd have put it over."

He spoke admiringly, like a favorably impressed dramatic critic, and Edith Crampton's dark eyes never left his face. For a time after he ceased speaking, she remained silent, but, to the astonishment of the jury, color was slowly returning to her pallid features and a faint smile curved her pale lips.

"I supplied what the public demands," said she in tones an octave higher than her earlier speech. "The thing for Richard Crampton's wife to do at the right moment was to faint, to appear in the role of a heartbroken wife. Now you've spoiled the effect. Only for your Paul Prying the world needn't have known how utterly I hated and despised Richard Crampton and that I'd planned to leave him. Perhaps," she taunted, "you'll arrest me for the murder!"

"Perhaps," agreed Quinn. "At least," said he, repeating his former words, "you had the opportunity and the motive."

Without a trace of embarrassment or apprehension, Mrs. Crampton accepted a seat near Dr. Rockwell while the coroner recalled Edward Walcott and questioned him further. After some queries relating to certain business deals of his late employer and the possibility of there being no will Coroner Groat turned the witness over to Quinn.

"Mr. Quinn wants to ask you about a letter," said he.

"It's the last one you wrote," said Quinn. "I notice that Mr. Crampton was old fashioned in his ideas—disliked typed copy; had all his work done with a pen except the book manuscript."

The secretary nodded, but his gaze had become a fixed stare.

"It was this handwriting," observed the detective, "that showed me you wrote one letter after your employer's death."

During an appreciable pause the significance of this statement escaped the jury, but Walcott spoke and his words had a frightened accent.

"Herrick received orders from Mr. Crampton, himself, to take me to the station," said he. "I was to take the 9:30."

"That was about nine o'clock," said the detective. "And as Herrick can make the drive in ten minutes he wouldn't bring around the car until about 9:20. So for twenty minutes you were closeted alone with Mr. Crampton in a retired portion of the house. During that time—for reasons you may explain later—you killed Richard Crampton. With dramatic instinct you added to the corpse an utterly useless poniard—for this weapon barely touched the skin—and a photograph. Seemingly this was to set the police to work on a blind trail. As you were about to leave the spot you noticed an unfinished letter. It was important—one promised by Crampton for that date. You felt obliged to complete the task. It would arouse suspicion not to do so. But your hand quivered. A magnifying glass shows wavering lines although to the naked eye the work appears normal. Yet every murderer leaves his mark and you wrote yours in the blackest ink."

While Quinn talked the accused seemed to melt down into his chair as if stricken with death. His handsome young face blanched and the clear, gray eyes filled with terror.

"He drove me mad," Walcott said in low vibrant tones when the officer signed for him to speak. "He taunted me with my illegitimate birth and insulted my dead mother. I struck him down. He was taken by surprise. I think he imagined I could not be driven to violence. He fell like a log and the back of his head struck one of the andirons. It caused instant death, but I was still boiling with rage. I fastened to his breast my reason for the blow. I wanted the world to guess what a blackguard the world had lost. It was justice—delayed justice!" The lad's voice failed. He sat like one in a dream.

"So you know the photograph," reminded Quinn. "Whose is it?"

"It's the likeness of my mother taken before my birth," said the boy dully.

Then Quinn put his last question.

"What relation are you to Richard Crampton?" he sharply interrogated.

Slowly Walcott raised his blond head and looked at the speaker.

"I am his son," said he, and his tone convinced.

The coroner's jury retired for consultation, but almost immediately filed back into the library. The foreman handed Coroner Groat a written verdict. It was surprisingly brief and headed a signed paper.

"After due consideration," read the heading, "we, the undersigned, find that Richard Crampton, the deceased, came to his death by an accidental fall in the library of his residence." And appended to this straggled the names of each juror.

The End.

* * *

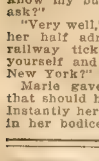
Figures Lie.

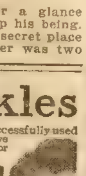
'Bena was much excited over the prospects of a camp meeting that was about to take place in her neighborhood. For weeks she had been preparing gay and gaudy feathers for the array, and now her outfit was complete, save a pair of much-desired patent leather slippers. She approached her mistress.

"Miss Ford," she said, "I sho' wants to git a pair o' slippers 'fo' de meetin' commences, an' I ain't got a single cent lef'."

"What size do you wear, 'Bena?" asked her mistress.

"Mah right numbah is fo'," she replied, "but I has to weah sebens, 'cause fo's hurt me dat bad I jes' natcherly caint hardly walk."





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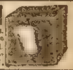

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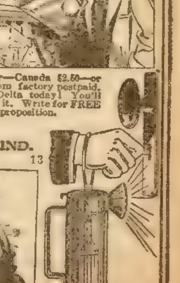

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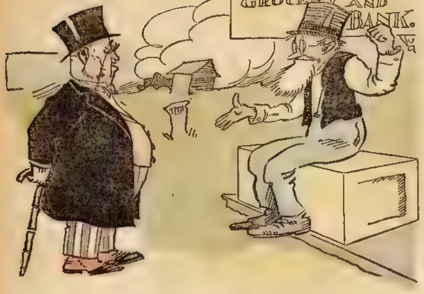

GROCERY AND BANK.

City Man—"So you found the faithful cashier for forty years was short in his accounts $2.48."

Hi Dike—"Yes, sir. And those blockhead directors couldn't see that he was livin' beyond his means fer the last seven years."

The Cause of the Trouble.

An advertising man tells this one.

"The heavy advertiser of a certain Indiana town entered the editorial offices of the daily paper, and in angry tones delivered himself as follows

"What's the matter with this sheet, anyhow? That was a fine break you people made in my ad yesterday!"

"What seems to be the trouble?" asked the editor anxiously

"'Read it and see!' said the advertiser; and he thrust a copy of the paper into the editorial hands.

"The unhappy editor read: 'If you want to have a fit, wear Jones' shoes.'"

How He Figured It.

The proprietor of the gents' furnishing emporium always ate in the quick-lunch establishment next door, but the owner of the latter had a grievance.

"I put out many signs," complained he. "I advertise lamb stew, beef hash, roast giblets. I watch you many times. Always you take something else."

"I guess that's so."

"Why is this?"

"Well, I figure it this way," explained the haberdasher. "Whenever I hang out a sign it's for something I want to get rid of."

Had Discovered a Germ.

Mrs R. was an extremely careful mother and had repeatedly cautioned her 6-year-old daughter against handling any object that might contain germs. One day the little girl said: "Mother, I am never going to play with my kitty any more, because she has germs on her."

"Oh, no," replied her mother, "there are no germs on your kitten."

"Yes, there are," insisted the child. "I saw one hop."

Couldn't Hit It.

"I admit that the architecture of this house is something fierce," said the agent, "but just see how handy the place is—only a stone's throw from the station."

"I see it is," said Tompkins, wearily, "but I'm such a rotten shot it wouldn't be any satisfaction to me."

The Artist.

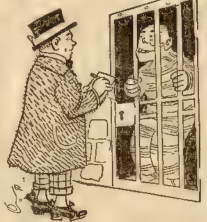
First Trooper, Imperial Yeomanry (discussing a new officer)—"Swears a don't 'e, sometimes?"

Second Trooper—"'E's a masterpiece, 'e is; just opens 'is mouth and lets it say wot it likes."

A Tainted Descent.

"So you believe that men are descended from monkey ancestors?"

"I don't believe that you are, but your descendants may be able to prove that they are."



Reporter—"Ever get scared while committing a burglary?"

Crook—"Once a woman woke up and said: 'This is a pretty time of night for you to be getting in!' For a minute I thought I was at home."

Covering Up Mistakes.

A pompous physician who was inclined to criticise others was watching a stonemason build a fence for his neighbor. He thought the mason used too much mortar.

"Jim," he said, "mortar covers up a good many mistakes, doesn't it."

"Yes, Doctor," calmly replied the mason, "and so does the spade."

Consoling Her.

During a recent slight illness the 5-year-old Teddy, usually so amiable, flatly and obstinately refused to take his medicine. After a somewhat prolonged and ineffectual argument with him his mother at last set the glass of medicine down, leaned her head on her hands and "played that she was crying" A moment passed and the tender-hearted Teddy, unable longer to bear the sight of his mother's stricken attitude, inquired, "What's the matter, mother dear?"

Without removing her hands from her eyes she replied, "I'm grieved that my son won't take his castor oil for me."

Whereupon Teddy sat up in bed and offered consolingly

"Oh, I wouldn't feel badly if I were you, mother dear. Father will be home soon and he'll make me take it."

Wonderful Woman.

With hat tipped over, no eye free,
'Tis very plain she cannot see.

With hair combed over the ears, 'tis clear
That she, of course, can hardly hear.

With gown so tight it causes talk,
'Tis plain that she can scarcely walk.

And yet she dodges autos, teams,
And gets along quite well, it seems.

Man never could survive, poor chap,
Beneath one-half that handicap.

She Would Be Gone.

"Dearest," coaxed the young wife, "would you mind getting your own luncheon today?"

"Why, no," sighed the business man, "I guess not. I——"

"Oh, it won't be a bit of trouble. The eggs are in the icebox, the butter is in the cellar, the meat will be on the back porch, and the coffee is where it always is, and——"

But where are you going to be at the lunch hour?"

"At cooking school, dear. The instructor is telling us how to make the grandest meringues'"

It Couldn't Be Age.

An Alabama man, meeting an old colored man formerly in his service, put to him the usual question: "Well, Jed, how are you today?"

"Tol'able, sah, tol'able," cautiously replied Jed. "Ah'd be all right, sah, if it wasn't for de rheumatism in mah right laig"

"Ah, well, Jed, we mustn't complain. We're all getting old and old age does not come alone."

"Ole age ain't got nuthin' to do wid it, sah. Heah's mah other laig just as ol' an' dat's sound 'an soople as kin be!"

It Didn't Matter.

Little Jimmy had been playing upstairs in the nursery while his mother was preparing dinner. All of a sudden his mother heard him falling downstairs and ran and picked him up and asked him how he happened to fall downstairs, at which he replied:

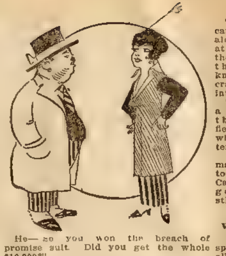
"I just caught my toe and fell, but it doesn't make any difference because I was coming down anyway."

Not a Philosopher.

Benevolent Individual—"Yes, sir; I hold that when a man makes a little extra money his first duty is to make his wife a present of a handsome dress."

Stranger—"You are a social philosopher, I presume?"

"No, sir; a dry goods merchant."



He—So you won the breach of promise suit. Did you get the whole $10,000?"

She—"Yes, I married my lawyer."

Improving His Arm.

"You are going in for polo?"

"Yes, sir," replied the weary-looking little man.

"I'm surprised at you"

"I need the practice. I fancy that after I learn to hit that little ball with a long handled mallet as I dash along on a mettlesome pony I may be able to go home and drive a tack without mashing my thumb."

Forgetful.

The steamboat came splashing along her course at full speed and the first thing the passengers knew she had crashed head on into the pier.

"Mercy!" cried a passenger, as the splinters flew, "I wonder what is the matter?"

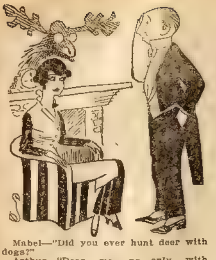
"Nothin' at all, ma'am—ut looks to me as if the Captain just forgot that we sthop here."

Woman's Age.

Joax—"Shakespeare told us all about the seven ages of man, but he didn't say anything about the two ages of woman"

Hoax—"And what are the two ages of woman?"

Joax—"The age she says she is, and the age she really is."



Mabel—"Did you ever hunt deer with dogs?"

Arthur—"Dear me, no—only with guides—dogs are too expensive to shoot."

Almost Entirely Wasted.

The steamer rolled and pitched in the mountainous waves, and Algy was very seasick

"Deah boy," he groaned, "promise me you will send my remains to my people."

An hour passed

"Deah boy," feebly moaned Algy, "you needn't bother about sending my remains home—there won't be any."

Would Accompany Her.

There is in Brooklyn a young, recently married couple who have been having the usual half-pathetic and wholly amusing experiences incident to somewhat limited means and total inexperience. Last Saturday there was a hitch in the delivery of the marketing, and Sunday found them with a practically empty larder. When dinner time came the young wife burst into tears

"Oh, this is horrible!" she wept. "Not a thing in this house for a dog to eat! I am going home to mamma!"

"If you don't mind, dear," the husband exclaimed, as he visibly brightened and reached for his hat, "I'll go with you!"

Not in His Line.

One of Atlantic City's life guards was discussing his profession.

'Funny things happen to us guards sometimes," said he. "A society belle from Spruce street went into the water wearing one of those fashionable transformations, or wigs. A big wave went over her, and when she came up the transformation was floating out to sea. She turned and ran to Tim.

"'Oh, save my hair," she yelled. 'Save my hair"

"'Pardon me, my lady,' says Tim. 'I'm a life saver, not a hair restorer.'"

Needed Something Large.

Miss Audrey had come to spend the week-end with friends in a little New Jersey town and exhibited a keen interest in the much talked of "Jersey skeeter."

When the greetings were over and the party settled down, the guest remarked to her host, after a careful survey of the porch:

"I don't see any mosquito netting around, William."

"No," answered he, "we're using mouse traps."

Observations.

Many a lightheaded girl wasn't born that way.

A stag party is no place to look for a dear

A good way to lose a friend is trying to economize on a wedding gift.

Public display is often made possible by private economy.

It's a mistake to air your views if they are rank.

Some men who have words with their wives are proud of the privilege.

Billinger's Den.

"When Billinger bought his new house, it was with the express understanding that he should have a room all of his own—a den or study."

"Yes, I know what you mean. Did he get it?"

"Yes; and his wife furnished it."

"How?"

"With a sewing machine, a cutting table, two dressers, dummies, three sewing chairs and a full-length mirror."

All Wrong but Jock.

A raw Scotch lad joined the local territorials and on the first parade his sister came, together with his mother, to see them. When they were marching past Jock was out of step

"Look, mither," said his sister, "they're a' oot o' step but our Jock!'

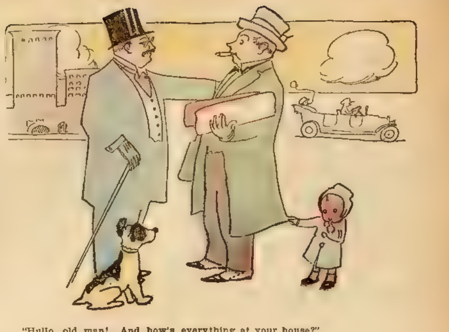
Anything but Water.

Constable—"Come along; you've got to have a bath"

Tramp—"A barf! What, wiv water?"

Constable—"Yes."

Tramp—"Couldn't you manage it wiv one o' them vacuum cleaners?"



"Hullo, old man! And how's everything at your house?"

"Oh, she's all right."

The Neighbors.

"I suppose you won't keep this new housemaid more than a week, either," said the spiteful neighbor

"Indeed, I'll not," replied the other spiteful one. "She's lied to me already. She told me she came from a highly respectable family, and I understand she's been working for you"

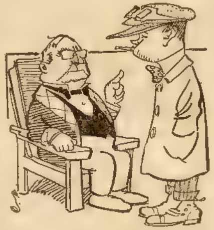
The Only Way.

Hemmandhaw—"Is there any way to make the women dress decently?"

Mrs. Hemmandhaw—"Certainly there is."

"Well, what is it?"

"Kill off the men"



Father—"You have had every chance to be a gentleman; all of your ancestors were gentlemen."

Son—"Not on both sides of the house, dad."

Not So Crazy.

"Your honor," said counsel, "this man's insanity takes the form of a belief that every one wants to rob him. He won't allow me, his counsel, to approach him."

"Maybe he's not so crazy after all," murmured the court, in a judicial whisper.

Tit for Tat.

A small boy had been given a penny with a hole in it. Handing it to a still smaller companion, he said:

"Jimmie, I dare you to go into that store and buy something with this penny."

Jimmy was quite willing. Entering boldly, he said:

"I want a doughnut." And, taking it, he hastily presented the penny

"Here," said the clerk, "this penny has a hole in it."

"So has the doughnut," announced Jimmy, triumphantly holding it up.

Hardly Noticed It.

Visiting New York for the first time, Uncle Henry happened to figure in an exciting runaway accident.

When he was finally rescued, his anxious nephew exclaimed

"You must have been frightened half to death!"

"No, indeed," replied Uncle Henry. "To tell the truth, I hardly knew the difference. I've been traveling at a pretty lively gait ever since I struck town."—Judge's Quarterly.

Not Transferable.

Mr. Dorman found Mr. Johnsing intently contemplating a piece of cardboard

Mr. Johnsing—"Say, Mr. Dorman, what am de meaning of dis here line on de ticket whar it says 'Not transferable'?'

Mr. Dorman—"Dat means, Bre'r Johnsing, dat no gen'leman am admitted unless he comes hisself."

Once Backed a Horse.

"Did yiz iver make iny money backin harses, Mulligan?"

"Sure. Oi made a hundred dollars wance."

"How did yez do ut?"

"Oi backed him down cillar, awn thin sued the mon for lavin' th' dure open."

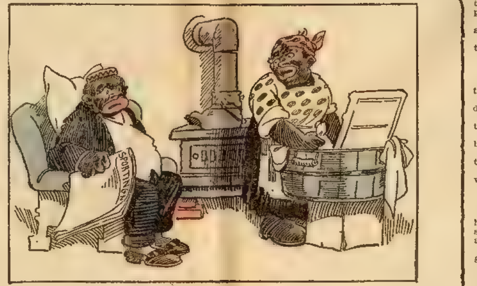
A Technical Term.

"You do not speak to him?"

"No," replied the scholarly girl. "When I passed him I gave him the geological survey."

"The geological survey!"

"Yes. What is commonly known as the stony stare."



Mrs. Jackson—"Yo' lazy nigger! S'pose I was took sick an' couldn't do washings, how would you live?"

Mr. Jackson—"Ah never thought ob dat, honey!" Ah'll hustle 'round tomorrow and git some health insurance on you!"

Good for Something.

The breakfast had been a silent one and Mr. Crabshaw had failed to eat his Scattered Oats, a fact that did not escape his better half. The conversation then took this form:

Mrs Crabshaw—"According to you, this breakfast food isn't good for anything."

Crabshaw—"Not at all, my dear. I think it would be first-rate stuff to sprinkle on the sidewalk during slippery weather."

The Preference.

"Mrs. Smith has a husband who pays her unremitting attention when she is away"

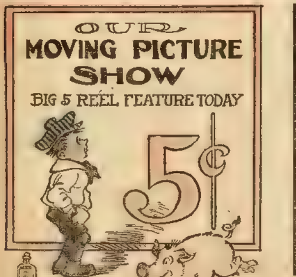
"I would rather have a husband of cash-remitting attention."

Not Enough to Eat.

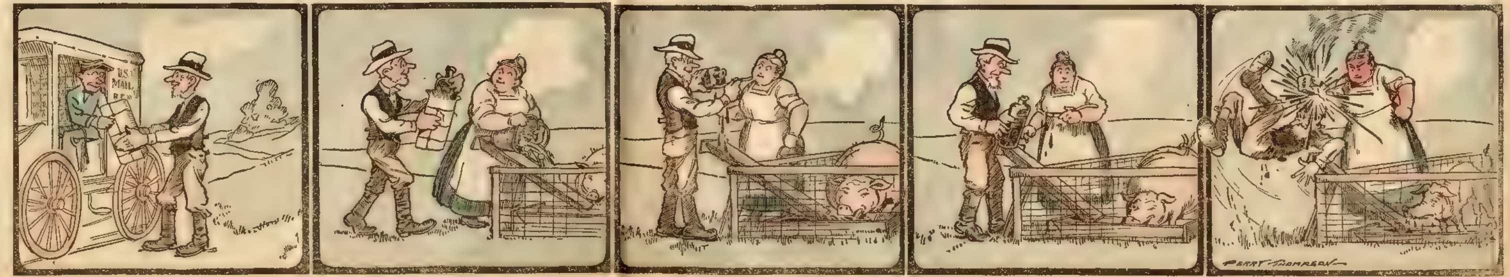
At a certain Scottish mansion, notorious for scanty fare, a gentleman was inquiring of the gardener about the dog which some time before he had given to the laird. The gardener showed him a lank greyhound, upon which the gentleman said

"No, no! The dog I gave your master was a mastiff, not a greyhound."

The gardener quietly answered: "Indeed, ony dog might sune become a greyhound by stopping here."



THE MEDICINE WORKED



Mail Carrier—"Fine day, Mr. Perkins. Here's the package yer wife's been lookin' for."

Mr. Perkins—"Here's yer anti-fat, Maw! It sez that fifteen draps will make yer slim inside o' five minutes."

Mr. Perkins—"We will try it out right now"

Mrs. Perkins—"Look out, Paw, you're spillin' it!"

Mr. Perkins—"Drat it, the hog is eatin' some of it!"

Mrs. Perkins—"What! After me feedin' him up all summer for the State Fair!"

Mrs. Perkins—"You old fathead, I'll put this anti-fat medicine on your coco where it will do the most good!"

A Triple Mystery

Or, Longman's Test Case

By Charles Morris Butler

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CHAPTER XIII.

TALK ON SCIENCE AND CRIME.

THE hour was late, but Frank resolved to visit Dr. Wright, at least long enough to make an appointment for an extended interview if necessary. He found the doctor, who proved to be a dentist, just preparing to leave his office.

"What can I do for you?" he asked. "It is rather late for anything but extraction."

"I am not a patient," replied Frank, laughing. Then he introduced himself.

The doctor shook the detective's hand warmly. "From Chicago, eh? So am I. Graduate of the N. W. U. dental school. Might I ask you to dine with me? Dinner is just about ready, and I am sure that Mrs. Wright would be glad to entertain you. She's a Chicago product and we both enjoy having visitors, especially from the city."

His invitation was so cordial that Frank accepted. After his rebuffs at the hands of Miller and Jones and Whitcomb, it was a relief to meet a gentleman. Mrs. Wright's greeting was none the less hearty, and the dinner passed off very pleasantly. The conversation at the dinner table naturally turned to the offerings of the different theaters in Chicago; consolidation of street railroads; building of new hotels; and the review of all those things dear to the hearts of those far from home, including politics and social conditions.

After dinner Mrs. Wright excused herself, saying that she had an engagement with her church choir and a general meeting, so this left the men free to walk back to the dentist's office, where the subject of the robbery was broached.

The doctor's offices consisted of a suite of three rooms; a reception-room, an operating-room, and a laboratory. It was situated over a news depot, ice cream parlor and cigar store—the most prominent corner in town. The lighting was electricity, and the rooms were fitted up with electric fans and other modern devices for comfort and utility. However, the doctor did not turn on the lights. As the two sat down at the window overlooking the main thoroughfare he said: "I don't think it necessary to light up; the street arc-lights are sufficent. As sure as I do, a patient or a friend will drop in to disturb us." He handed Longman a cigar. "Smoke?"

"Sure," and the two were soon puffing contentedly on their cigars.

"Kind of a mysterious robbery you had, doctor?" queried the detective.

"In a way, yes," replied the dentist. "Still, it was to be expected. Doctors and dentists court robbery. Their offices are usually left unguarded between office hours. I cut out a clipping from the Chicago Tribune only yesterday stating that several doctors' and dentists' offices along Ogden avenue in Chicago were robbed. Hundreds of dollars' worth of gold crowns and tools were taken. I hardly expected a like robbery here, though. The publication of the details of such crimes has a tendency to create other like crimes, don't you think?"

"So the Committee on the Prevention of Vice contend, who censor moving pictures; as do also the publishers of the Christian Science Monitor, and other Christian publications. But I don't see how you can avoid exploiting such news in a newspaper. That's the only excuse a paper can have for existing, the publishing of facts as news. So you don't think it mysterious? What did you lose?"

"A pair of forceps and an electrically driven tooth drill and a roll of bills. I am not so sure of the money, however; I may have lost the bills out of my smoking-jacket. I had thirty dollars put away for my rent, and when I came to need it, it was gone."

"Yet you say that your robbery was not mysterious. Doesn't it strike you as queer that the robber did not load up on other things, gold crowns and other valuables?"

"No. My other tools were in my laboratory, which was not entered, and, as a matter of truth, I have no gold crowns in stock at present. What little sheet gold I use I buy from our local jeweler as needed."

"You could identify your tools if you saw them?"

"The forceps, yes. They were made especially for me—very light and small and of a design furnished by myself. There was no trade mark on them. The drill is of a standard pattern purchased from Sharpe & Smith."

"Have you any idea who took them?" asked the detective.

"Can't imagine. Possibly some light-fingered person who really did not know of their value. I would think some doctor or dentist responsible, or at least some person, mechanic or salesman, who knew the value of instruments and could find a ready sale for them. Yet the item in the Tribune shows that thieves will steal anything they can get their hands on, whether they have use for it or not. As Shakespeare would put it:

'Who steals my purse, steals trash,
But he who steals my tools takes away
from me
My means of earning a livelihood.'

"I used to pride myself upon the fact that I had the best-equipped dental laboratory of any doctor north of Chicago. Now I will have to go back to using a foot-power drill, like my friend, Dr. Thompson. It will be like going back to medieval times after living in the twentieth century."

"You are aware that there was another robbery committed in this town lately, I presume?" asked the detective, at a loss to know how to proceed further.

"I had not heard of it!" exclaimed the dentist. "Who was it?"

"Jones & Co. But please keep it under your hat. I have been requested not to say anything about it."

"Any serious loss?"

"The cash register was rifled for a few dollars, so I understand." The detective thought it best not to go into further details.

"Any clew?"

"I hardly think so."

Was it a sigh of relief that Longman heard? He thought it was. But glancing at the dentist he only saw him smoking vigorously, throwing clouds of smoke in the air. Then a happy thought took possession of him.

"You say that your laboratory was not disturbed. I am interested in tools and workrooms in general. Would you mind showing me around?"

"Not in the least," and the doctor rose with promptness and made his way to the room. He turned on one of the incandescent lights, fumbled for a key, found it, inserted it in the Yale lock which guarded his treasures, and opened the door. Another light was turned on, and Frank saw a well-kept laboratory, spick and span clean. The woodwork was white, the tables and work bench were covered with white enameled iron. Several instruments were inclosed in a glass case away from dust and dirt. Over the work bench were several shelves filled with bottles and cans, and on the bench, pliers, files, and other tools and an alcohol blowpipe.

"Behold my den," said the doctor. "Isn't she a beauty?"

"Finest I ever saw!" said Longman.

"I am proud of it. Here on the shelves are my drugs and chemicals. I'll bet that there is not another one like it in this section of the State." He grew enthusiastic.

"I should think it would be rather nauseating to work continuously among drugs," said Frank.

"Every man to his own trade. You don't notice it after a while. I notice the use of anesthetics more than anything else. The sickening odor of chloroform and ether has a tendency to make even the operator dopy. I use very little cocoaine for the freezing of the gums. It's dangerous and the after-effect on the patient is usually very bad. I use a decoction of my own make, a fluid mouth-wash, which is at once an antiseptic and anesthetic. I am experimenting to do away with drugs entirely."

"It must cost you quite a bit for drugs," suggested Longman.

"It did until I took to purchasing direct wholesale. Now it does not cost so much. I am pretty freely supplied with samples of the newer articles which flood the market. I used to buy my material from Jones, but since he has transferred his trade to Dr. Thompson, who visits here three or four times a year, I have ceased to do so. I visit Thompson myself occasionally, because I can not do my own work, and like to keep in touch with modern methods. But I don't think it fair of Jones to spend his money with a competitor, a non-resident, so long as I buy from him. He has lost considerable by his dealings, too, more than he would have had to pay me for his work, if he had continued his reciprocal agreement."

Longman pricked up his ears at this statement, yet there was no movement of his muscles which told that he was more than passingly interested. The dentist reached up to the shelf, took down a can, and handed it to the detective. "I used to buy all my ether from him, which was considerable. I now buy it for about one-half."

Frank turned the can over in his hands carelessly, but before he handed it back glanced on the bottom. He could hardly suppress an exclamation for he plainly saw three letters on the can—HEZ!

Before Frank could frame up an excuse for further questioning, he was aware that a third party had entered the reception-room. With a polite "excuse me," Dr. Wright left the laboratory, and a second afterwards the detective heard voices talking in an undertone.

The detective quickly scanned the shelves to see if he could find trace of more cans of ether. None showed themselves to his eyes. Then he turned in time to see a dapper little man with a high hat disappearing through the doorway.

"I knew somebody would drop in on me, if I lit up," said the dentist, by way of apology. "That was Dr. Forsythe. I ran short of ether the other day and had him get me a can. He was just up here to tell me that he couldn't supply any more; all out of stock. I don't care, I have enough now to last me for the present. Do you mind if I turn out the lights again?"

"Not at all," said the detective, and he took his place at the window again, while Dr. Wright closed and locked his laboratory and turned out the lights. These moments gave Frank time for serious reflection. "What new complication was entering here?"

"You cannot aid me in any way to trace your tools, I suppose?" queried the detective.

"I wish I could."

"How could a man get away with such a bulky article as a machine?"

"There's only four parts to it; foot-rods, arms and table. You could disconnect it and take it apart in five minutes and carry it away in a package," responded the dentist. "'Gone where the woodbine twineth,' as the poet says, or like the disappearing lady from the magician's cabinet."

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"Speaking about magicians," asked Longman, "do you happen to know a man by the name of Wharton?"

"I took in a show in Kaslovia given by a man of that name. Something of a hypnotist and mind-reading stunt. Don't think much of him."

"You have never met him personally?"

"Never. I went down to see his act because I am interested in hypnotism. He is something of a fraud. He could not influence any but neurotic or simple-minded persons I can do better than that myself."

"You believe that the power to hypnotize is held by some persons?" asked Longman.

"Undoubtedly. And what may seem incredible to you, it does not require a strong mind to dominate a weaker one. The reverse is possible."

"You surprise me! I had a peculiar thing happen to me a few days ago. I was assaulted by a practical stranger. I learned shortly afterwards that this man, an Italian by the name of Antonio Ferreri, had once been hypnotized by this Wharton we were speaking about. I had a quarrel with Wharton. I would not have been surprised if Wharton had slugged me to get even, but I never had a quarrel with the Italian. Do you suppose that Wharton could have influenced Antonio to assault me?"

"Quite possibly." Frank could plainly see that Dr. Wright was an enthusiast on the subject of hypnotism. "I don't want you to get the idea in your head, though," added the doctor, "that I believe any man possesses the power to hypnotize anyone by simply making a few passes at him and ordering the subject to do something. You must first have a passive subject—a thought in harmony—so that at the correct time the patient can be put under control. After once controlling a subject, though the spell was broken temporarily, the hypnotist could regain control even if some considerable space (air) lay between them. I have seen the recall made many times."

"Do you think that a hypnotist could influence a man to steal or commit other crimes?"

"Yes, I do, if the subject is inclined to be loose in his morals. But science does not. Or, shall I say, 'says it does not?' At least it does not want to recognize it. Prof. Munsterberg of Harvard, in an article in McClure's Magazine, all but admitted that a man with hypnotic powers could influence murder —that is, through the proper subject. But he evades the direct question. He doesn't imply that a perfectly innocent man could be placed under the spell and given a knife and if told to do so would plunge it into the breast of a man he had never seen. But I dare say that he would plunge it into the breast of an enemy or person he had a grudge against, if his moral reasoning would assure him he could get away with it."

"Horrible, isn't it?" exclaimed the detective.

"The hypnotic power, I presume you mean? Yes, when placed in the hands of an unscrupulous person. It can be made a God-given blessing in the hands of loyal persons like doctors, dentists, nurses, et al. If, for instance, hypnotism could be made to supplant anesthetics in surgery cases. Or in the case of hysterical persons, if they could be placed under a spell and made to forget their troubles, instead of being pumped full of cocaine, opium, or morphine—built up instead of torn down—its value could not be computed. Doctors and nurses undoubtedly exert such influence many times without knowing that they do so. This 'magnetic' influence you hear so much about is only an untrained form of hypnotism. And this may be practiced by a mother when she gently strokes the head of her restless infant and softly croons, 'go to sleep, my darling!' There was a case recently cited in a leading medical journal where a father put his child to sleep by hypnotic suggestion unconsciously, and only by the merest accident was made to wake the child by the same influence. It's a great study."

"It is indeed, and little understood," remarked Longman.

"It is better understood by the medical fraternity than the people in general are led to believe," answered the doctor. "But the law does not wish to recognize it, any more than it wishes to recognize that a man is irresponsible (insane) when under the influence of narcotics or alcohol. It wouldn't do. If it so recognized the influence of whisky, for instance, all a criminal would have to do would be to go out and presumably tank up, commit a crime, and if caught at it, plead drunkenness and irresponsibility. Yet those are the conditions which exist, nine times out of ten."

You mean crimes are committed unconsciously while the perpetrators are under the influence of either liquor or drugs?"

"Just what I mean! Then the brain comes to the aid of the criminal, and later they may or may not know or realize what has happened. This is exemplified in the strange case of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.'"

"Your discussion has been very entertaining," said Longman, arising, "but I am afraid that I will have to cut it short. I don't seem to be making much progress in solving the mystery of your robbery. I hardly think you will recover your tools save through a case of extreme luck."

"Nor I, and yet I may have this good luck." The doctor was at least optimistic.

"You have a clew, then?" asked the detective, surprised.

"Not exactly a clew. Simply an idea received during the course of our talk."

"May I ask what it is? Perhaps I can put two and two together. I have some idea myself."

"I would rather not say. I might be mistaken."

"I will see you tomorrow, then?" said the detective.

"I hardly think so. I'm going to catch an early train for Kaslovia in the morning."

"Before you go, doctor, may I ask you one more question?"

"Certainly, what is it?"

"Do you know of a young man by the name of George Barstow?"

The dentist hesitated, then said: "Never heard of him. Who is he?"

"A postal clerk at Vaughnton at present. But I understand that he clerked for Jones & Co. at one time."

Again the doctor hesitated. "Must have been before my time. I only know young Forsythe. Awfully glad I met you, Longman, and if you remain in town after tomorrow I will be glad to see you again."

The doctor and the detective parted on the street corner, and Longman was soon at his hotel.

CHAPTER XIV.

END OF THE TRAIL.

"A LADY to see you, sir," the hotel clerk said to Longman upon his arrival at the hotel after his interview with Dr. Wright. "Shall I notify her of your arrival?"

"As you please!" replied the weary detective. "Tell her I will meet her out on the balcony. It's a nice warm evening and the moon is quite bright enough for all purposes but reading." Frank purchased a few cigars and then made his way to the balcony leading off from the reception-room on the second floor. It was deserted when he arrived, but he was soon joined by the woman.

"You don't seem over anxious to get 'Howe's' confession," she said in a peeved tone.

"I am not, I am doing very nicely without it. I am about of the opinion that I am better without it, then I will be under no obligations to you or 'Howe' as you call him." Frank was telling a deliberate lie. He was quite anxious to get the confession, he felt that was the only way the mysteries could be cleared up, positively, but he did not mean to expose the cards in his hands. He wanted to make the terms, not have the terms of capitulation made for him.

"To say the least you are discouraging," said the woman, trembling, in spite of her attempt to be brave. "Here I have spent hours and days trying to get him to confess; made arrangements to pay back all the money stolen, and now you back out after promising to let him go. Are you going to keep your word?"

"Isn't it better for me to back out now, before a confession has been made, rather than later? And I did not say that I would let him go. I said if he would make a full and free confession and reimburse the losers, that I would not appear against him. The law may have something to say in his regard. He would have to run the chances of acquittal."

"We will take the chances. I don't see where we have anything to lose. You get the confession to show that you have cleared up the case. The money is returned, and nobody appears to prosecute him. That ends the matter."

"Suppose that I am not satisfied that he has made a full confession? In that case you would lose more than you gain."

"Well, for God's sake what do you want to know?"

"It would be folly for me to tell you how much I know. He would then only confess to those things that I suggest."

"Wouldn't that be sufficient? That's all you care about isn't it?"

"If the Inspector is satisfied, yes."

"What has Inspector Shea got to do with it? He has jurisdiction in Cook County only. I've seen Sheriff Whitcomb and I know that he will be satisfied. All he wants to do is hush up the matter. You couldn't take 'Howe' out of Borden County even if you wanted to."

"You are a pretty wise woman," replied the detective. "It is a shame that you don't put your talents to better use. So you have fixed the sheriff, have you? That's why he is so independent. All I have to do is to turn over the evidence to him! You have won your point; have the confession made out, I'll turn it over to the sheriff. Now that you have won your point, may I ask you a few personal questions?"

"As many as you like," she replied. "But you can hardly expect me to answer them if they are of a compromising nature."

"It can hardly be more compromising than a confession."

"Wharton's confession does not implicate me, only that I am associated with him in the profession. What do you want to know?"

"How strong is Wharton as a hypnotist? Could he influence a man like Antonio, for instance, to commit a crime?"

"If you mean, did he hypnotize Antonio and force him to assault you, I would say 'yes.' If it had not have been for me he would have had you killed by Antonio in Lewiston."

"Unless I woke up and prevented it."

"You were unconscious; how could you?"

"Drugged, you mean?"

"Certainly."

"How, and with what?" asked the detective.

"Ether. You had enough vapor in your system to kill an ordinary man."

"Where did you get this drug?" asked the detective in a startled voice.

"Me? I didn't get it at all."

"Where did Wharton get it? How many cans did he have?"

"I don't know where he got it. He had a can, that's all I know about it. He might have stolen it, for all I know."

"I presume he did," replied the detective. "Where is this can now?"

"I cleaned out Wharton's suitcase this morning and threw it out in the alley, after emptying what was left of the fluid into the toilet," she replied candidly.

"Your candor and bravado are something wonderful," said Longman. "Do you imagine yourself and your pal so immune from the law, that you think you can use such high-handed, unlawful methods and continue to get away with them? Is it possible that a woman with

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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AGENTS—MAKE $10.00 A DAY SELLING rugs at $1.00 each, cost agents 55 cents. Sixe 36x68 inches, sell from one to six at each house. Sample rug by parcel post 98 cents Commerce Specialty Co., Commerce, Texas

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9,999,999 CAPACITY POCKET ADDING machine $3; agents 100% profit. Specialty House, Waukesha, Wis.

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MEN AND LADIES WANTED TO ADDRESS envelopes and mail advertising matter for mail order firms; spare or whole time. Can make from $10 to $35 weekly. Book explaining everything mailed for 10c to cover postage, etc. Ward Specialty Co., Box 433, Chicago.

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DETECTIVE—INTERESTING WORK, GOOD pay, we teach how, ten lessons, $2. Write Walter J. Burns Correspondence School, Inc., Detective Training School, Desk 29, Burns Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

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I MADE $50,000 IN FIVE YEARS WITH A small mail order business; began with $5. Send for free booklet. Tells how. Heacock, Box 757, Lockport, N. Y.

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FIREMEN AND BRAKEMEN; $100 MONTHly; experience unnecessary; hundreds needed by best railroads everywhere; particulars free. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

BE DETECTIVES; OPERATE OWN LOcality; experience unnecessary; secret service. Sturgill Detective Agency, Norton, Va.

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KENTUCKY'S BEST NATURAL LEAF FOR smoking or chewing, prepaid to consumer three pounds for $1. Box 1338 Natural Leaf Tobacco Co., Hopkinsville, Ky.

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LADIES: MAKE SHIELDS AT HOME. $10 per 100. No canvassing required. Send stamped-addressed envelope for full particulars Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Mich.

WANTED—APRON MAKERS. SEND DIME (returned if dissatisfied) and stamped, addressed envelope, Kenwood, 442 B, E. 61st St., Chicago, Ill.

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LEARN AT HOME EASY LESSONS, LADIES' and children's hairdressing, marcel waving, manicuring, beauty culture. Many earn $18 to $50 weekly. Pleasant work. Large illustrated book free. Elizabeth King, 34 B, Station F, New York City.

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MOTHERS—SEND FOR OUR FREE BOOK, "How to Train Your Boy to Make Money," written by a big-hearted man who has started more boys on the road to success than any other one in America. It tells—how to train your boy to be manly and independent—how to earn regular weekly salary—how to get his own clothes—how to handle money and accounts accurately—how to run a little business—It's free. Simply state your boy's name and age and the book will be sent. M. Siddall, 52 W. Illinois Street, Chicago.

The Triple Mystery

(Continued from page fifteen.)

your brains could voluntarily tie herself up to such a brazen-faced scoundrel as Wharton?"

"Don't!" she cried. "I love the man. Sometimes when I am away from him for some time, I grow afraid of him. I loathe and despise myself when I think of things as they are! Then, when I am in his presence, and I look into his large, dark eyes, I don't think of anything but how I love him. He is not such a bad man, either, when sober and when not experimenting along dangerous lines. I sometimes think he has me in his power and has me do things unconsciously under his suggestion. It would be terrible if he was making a criminal out of me without my knowledge"'

"It's possible," acquiesced the detective. "Why don't you tear yourself away from him now that you have the chance?"

"I can't—I can't! Even now I see his finger beckoning for me to come! I hear his voice crying to me out of the darkness—and I must go. I cannot resist him. He has promised to marry me—to cut out all gambling—to quit the use of hypnotism altogether if I will help him to keep out of prison! Say you won't back out, and when I return I will bring the confession."

She ran from him as if she had been propelled by some invisible force. He saw her almost fly down the stairs, and cut across the square on her way to the County jail.

Longman sat idly smoking several cigars. He was thinking deeply. All the events of the past few days passed kaleidoscopically before his mind's eye. He fitted link by link the chain of evidence around Wharton. He weighed the evidence against Barstow. The different characters in the drama of life passed in review before him. Haynes, Smithson, Miller, Jones, Dr. Wright. Finally he thought of ether. A happy thought came to him. He went downstairs, out the side door of the hotel, and into the alley.

A cloud passed between the earth and moon and darkness fell for a few moments. He stumbled over a few ashes, the remains of a recent bonfire, and his foot loosened a bundle of half-burned papers from the bottom of the debris. He spied a can which looked like an ether can. As he stooped to pick it up, he saw a second can and picked it up also out of the burnt embers, and wrapped the two with several pieces of half-burned paper. With his treasures in his hands he returned to the hotel and made his way to his room, intending to examine the cans to see if the private mark of Jones & Co. was to be found upon them.

Before he had time to examine the cans Miss DeWolfe returned. She evidently knew the location of his room and brought him a sealed envelope.

"Here's the confession," she said soberly. "He had it about ready. Read it and let me know of your decision in the morning. I am so weary that I will drop unless I retire at once."

Frank Longman returned to his table, lit the gas, opened Wharton's letter and read the contents. A cry of astonishment left his lips:

"The mystery is solved! I have won my bet!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

REDUCED to reasonable space Wharton's confession amounted to the following:

"First—To exonerate Miss De Wolfe, I will state that she is innocent of having committed a crime knowingly. I am a hypnotist; she has been my most pliable and willing subject—always under my control. I forced her to steal young Smithson's pocketbook and give it to me. I alone am responsible for this crime. I might say, though it may not be believed, that this is the first and only crime (robbery) I ever committed, though I have been accused many times. It has been an experiment with me, to see just how far I could go in the control of subjects—whether innocent people could be influenced to commit crime by hypnotic suggestion. I know they can, even to the extent of murder.

"Second—In the case of Antonio Ferreri: Despite his build and muscular ability, he is a very nervous man. I easily hypnotized him on the stage of the Lewiston theater. When I was accused of cheating at cards by Longman, I grew very angry and resolved to have him punished. At that time I did not know Longman was a detective, but thought him simply a meddler. And that was my downfall. I re-hypnotized Ferreri and forced him to assault the detective. Later, fearing discovery for the Smithson robbery, I forced Ferreri to attempt to kidnap the detective. This was performed partly as an experiment, working on the Italian's evident animosity toward the man who had him arrested. To make the kidnaping easy I etherized Longman.

"Third—I won about five hundred dollars from Henry Haynes and his party playing poker. I cheated him and am willing to return the money.

"Fourth—Miss De Wolfe told me Longman asked her where I got the can of ether with which I drugged him? I don't know whether this is important or not, but I stole it from a Dr. Thompson, a traveling dentist. He had a suite of rooms opposite mine in the Borden Hotel. I saw Mr. Jones go into the dentist's room with five cans, and when the dentist and the druggist went out on the balcony for a smoke, I took one of the cans. I am sure that he had Jones under his control."

It was at this point that Longman exclaimed:

"The mystery is solved! I have won my bet!" Then he added to himself: "The traveling dentist is the guilty party. My friend Dr. Wright has his suspicions also. Too much of a man to insinuate such a thing to me, he has gone down to Kaslovia to verify his suspicions. If he finds that Dr. Thompson has his forceps and drill, it will be positive proof that the traveling dentist is the guilty man. I think that I will take the journey with Dr. Wright."

* * *

The balance of this story can best be told by reporting an interview between Inspector Shea, Detective Longman and Secretary Jenks, which took place upon Frank's return to Chicago.

"Did you succeed in clearing up the mysteries?" asked the Inspector. "You haven't made a report for three days."

"I did not think it wise to burden you with my theories. I preferred to present facts. Yes, I have discovered the perpetrator of the crimes—a Dr. Thompson, a traveling dentist, a scientific hypnotist of high degree."

"And he committed all the crimes? Explain yourself," ordered the Inspector.

"You mean to imply that Thompson hypnotized all the people and made them rob themselves? A pretty far-fetched theory, I should say," laughed Secretary Jenks.

"Not so far-fetched as you imagine, Jenks, since I have the confession of the doctor in my possession. He admits it!" responded Frank.

"When you hear me out, you will have to admit that I am entitled to any honor I may get out of it. The man is dead!"

"This grows interesting, tell me the story from the beginning," again ordered the Inspector.

"At Lewiston I was confronted with the problem of having a safe cracked without violence. At least five people had the keys to the store and knew the combination of the safe. I naturally thought one of these five guilty, unless a sixth party could be implicated. For a sixth party my suspicions first fell on Ralph Wharton, a theatrical man, who, as you know, possesses hypnotic powers and is also gifted with the fatal faculty of being able to solve difficult combination problems. Inasmuch as I knew him to be at least a petty thief, I followed him closely and finally had him locked up on a criminal charge to keep him in Borden County among the other five. Circumstances pointed very strongly to Mr. Haynes himself as the robber, owing to the fact that his daughter Helen saw him return to the store. He had been to a dentist and had some work performed. Now I know that he had been hypnotized and made to rob himself. Of course, in favor of the dentist. But at the time I imagined that Haynes in a fit of abstraction or while in a somnambulistic state had taken the money from the safe and misplaced it. But that I could not prove."

"Go on, your tale grows interesting," said the chief.

"In Vaughnton, my next step, the case of Miller Brothers, was much the same. I readily learned that Wharton had been in town on the day of the robbery. There was a possibility of connecting him with the crime. Suspicion pointed to George Barstow, the postal clerk, as the criminal. But an element here entered that I could not overlook: the possibility of Miller robbing the safe himself for the purpose of throwing the blame on his rival in love. Here it was again proven that Miller (like Haynes) had returned to the store after having ostensibly left it for the night. He denied this emphatically, saying that he had been to the dentist's. Even here I could not see the dentist connection. I also learned that Barstow had been an employe of Haynes' and still had keys to the store and that the combination of the safe had never been changed. Circumstantial evidence was so strong that I was almost convinced of his guilt, knowing that he had been in Vaughnton on the date of the Haynes robbery."

"And you would have been justified according to the evidence," said Mr. Jenks. "I see the drift now. But how did you finally connect up the dentist on the hypnotic theory?"

"I am coming to that. In Bordenville I got my first clew. Besides money, Jones & Co. had been robbed of five one-pound cans of ether. This gave me a faint idea—suggested doctors and dentists to me. I was surprised to learn that George Barstow had also been an employe here, and that he had a key to the store. I even overlooked the fact that Jones had been to a dentist and that the dentist had desired to buy some ether. The Barstow lead was so great that I came very nearly overlooking the real clew. I learned that Barstow and Wharton had both been in Bordenville on the day of the robbery. On top of this I might state, Rena De Wolfe had tried to bribe me not to appear against Wharton. Knowing that I had no jurisdiction over him in Borden County, I promised to leave the matter in Whitcomb's hands provided that he would hand me a written confession to show you and to turn over to Whitcomb. Somehow I did not think that Wharton would confess everything, even if guilty. In Lewiston I had been drugged and assaulted by an Italian under the hypnotic influence of Wharton. What I had been drugged with never struck me, until my mind became centered on Thompson, or I would have connected Wharton with the Jones robbery more closely than I did.

"At Dr. Wright's office I learned many startling facts. Our conversation had been mostly on hypnotism from a scientific standpoint. I even grew a little suspicious of him. He had lost a pair of forceps and an electric drill. Here I had three things, ether, forceps, drill, to point to a dentist as the robber. Not conclusive evidence, but tangible. To my mind, Dr. Wright connected Jones with Thompson through the fact that he was sore at Jones for patronizing the traveling dentist instead of himself. I found a can of Jones' ether in Dr. Wright's laboratory and I grew more suspicious of Wright, until I learned that he was in the habit of buying it from Jones' partner, who was sup-

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Love is sugar; near love is taffy.

Most men reckon time by pay days.

Haste makes waste, but it saves rust

Too many lazy men pose as martyrs.

Honest labor is the best wheel of fortune.

After some men start they are too lazy to stop.

A lot of opportunities come at inopportune times.

Many a man's self-conceit is due to ignorance.

Some people talk so much that they have no time to think.

A wise man knows all he tells, but he never tells all he knows.

The world is an iron ring on which every one cuts his eye teeth.

It is far easier to live within your income than it is to live without it.

A bachelor would rather hold a 150 pound girl than a ten pound baby.

Every woman has a tender spot; it may be in her heart or it may be on her toe.

Solomon would have drawn the color line at painting towns red and feeling blue.

No, man's education is complete until he can tell when a woman's hat is on straight.

Some candidates lose out because they are unknown and some because they are too well known.

Every man has an excuse for wanting the earth, but his excuse is never satisfactory to his neighbors.

The so-called better half of the matrimonial combine never ceases trying to find out how the other half lives.

It's a case of love's labor lost when a woman has to take in washing in order to support a worthless husband.

Many a man who thinks he knows it all doesn't even know why a hen lays an egg instead of standing it on end.

We often wonder what the Lord thinks of the loafers who sit around on empty store boxes and criticise the weather.

The average woman may not be much at mathematics, but she does a lot of figuring in trying to perfect her figure.

No man has any business to get married until he can listen to a crying baby without saying things that wouldn't look well in print.

While the easy going individual is trying to figure out which is the best foot to put forward the strenuous man proceeds to get there with both feet.

PEPPERS

Home Hearts the Kindest.

Dr. George Howard Calhoun, in a sermon in Charleston, said, apropos of the fiftieth anniversary of the freedom of the slaves:

"Some of the freed slaves, during Reconstruction days, went North—went to New England—to make their fortunes. But they didn't get in New England as open-hearted a welcome as they had expected.

"There's a story about one ex-slave who was reduced to begging in New England. He went from house to house in vain. The dialogue would be like this:

"'Can you give me somethin' to do, sah?'

"'No, mister. Sorry. But I haven't got nothing you could do.'

"'Can you give me somethin' ter eat, then? I'm most starvin'.'

"'No, mister, I'm sorry; but we don't encourage beggin' in these parts.'

"Finally, on his last legs, the ex-slave rang another bell and began.

"'Boss, I'm starvin', an'——'

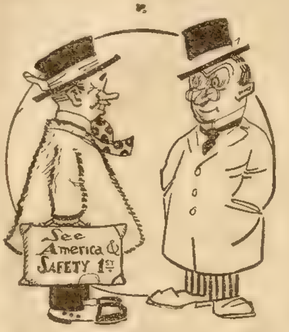
"But a voice interrupted the mendicant fiercely:

"'You black, kinky-headed rascal, what do you mean by ringin' my front door bell? Go round to the kitchen! Ain't you had no bringin' up? Go round and tell the cook to give you——'

"But tears welled up into the poor mendicant's eyes, and he exclaimed in a broken voice:

"'Thank Gawd I's found my own white folks at last! Thank the Lawd I's found 'em. I's found 'em!'"

◆



"When I visit the Grand canyon of the Yellowstone I realize the insignificance of man. Ever been there?"

"Never. You can get the same sensation by going to a suffragette meeting."

◆

A Philosophical View.

The topic switched to taking a philosophic view of things and Congressman Patrick D. Norton of North Dakota told of the beautiful composure with which one Jones met a rather trying situation.

One day Mrs. Jones rushed into the old man's presence with hasty steps and a wild look of excitement.

"Oh, John! Oh, John!" she exclaimed, with a lot of emotional thrills. "Norah made a mistake and tried to light the kitchen fire with gasoline!"

"Gasoline, eh?" calmly responded John. "Did she get it started?"

"Did she get it started?" cried the amazed Mrs. Jones. "It blew her out the kitchen window!"

"That's all right, my dear," returned the philosophic Jones. "It was her afternoon out, anyway."

◆

A Gift of Nature.

A story that is going the rounds is as follows: At a recent visit of the Secretary of the Navy to the academy at Annapolis, he was jostled in a crowd of visitors to such a degree that a man of large proportions trampled heavily upon the secretarial toe.

Instead of apologizing when Mr. Daniels turned his head to see who had crushed his foot, the offender growled out:

"What do you mean by giving me such a nasty look?"

"Why," returned the Secretary suavely, "I notice that you have a nasty look, but I had nothing to do with giving it to you."

◆

The Fire Fan.

The professional fire fighter is too frequently face to face with danger to regard fires in an aesthetic light, but the feelings of the amateur with a passion for "running with the machine" occasionally show an epicurean flavor.

While running to a fire in a large town in Massachusetts, one citizen overtook another, who was going in the same direction.

"Oh, dear!" the latter gasped, quite out of breath. "I hope it's not the stove lining works; I've seen that twice already!"

The Boomerang.

There is a lady in Richmond who has in her employ a darky servant of a most curious disposition.

"Did the postman leave any letters, Lilly?" the mistress asked on one occasion on returning from a call in the neighborhood.

"There ain't nothing but a postcard, ma'am," said Lilly.

"Who is it from?" asked the mistress craftily.

"'Deed I don't know, ma'am," said Lilly, with an air of innocence.

"Well, any one who sends me a message on a postcard is either very stupid or impertinent," suggested the lady of the house.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Lilly, with dignity, "but that ain't no way to talk 'bout yo' own mother."

* * *

The Triple Mystery

(Continued from page seventeen.)

plying him with articles unknown to Jones.

"I asked Dr. Wright about George Barstow. He did not know him. Then I asked him about Wharton. This led to the discussion of hypnotism. Without saying anything about it, I had made up my mind to investigate Dr. Thompson. He was known to be out of ether, and according to Dr. Wright was using a foot-power drill. Beside, who would want a pair of forceps but a dentist? When we parted, which was prematurely, he told me he was going down to Kaslovia. That's where I knew Thompson had billed himself for. This let me know that Dr. Wright was also suspicious of Thompson. My own suspicions were confirmed by Wharton confessing to me that he had stolen the ether (with Jones' price mark on it) from Dr. Thompson. He also intimated that Thompson was a hypnotist, which I had suspected. It was only on that theory I connected him with the crimes.

"I rode over to Kaslovia with Dr. Wright. 'Doctor,' I said, 'while having your teeth fixed by Dr. Thompson, I presume that you talked shop. He knew of your having invented a new kind of forceps and owned a drilling machine, did he not?'

"'Certainly,' he answered, surprised. 'He was over to see my office and appliances. He greatly admired my instruments.'

"Have you any reason to suspect Dr. Thompson of stealing your tools?' I asked.

"'Yes and no!' he exclaimed. 'He is a fellow professional and I have no right to give voice to what might turn out to be unfounded suspicion.'

"'Do you know Dr. Thompson to be a hypnotist?' I asked.

"'I have every reason to believe he is.'

"'Granted that he is so,' said I, 'in your judgment could he have hypnotized you and made you give him your instruments?'

"'I believe he did!' he exclaimed, 'and that's why I am going over to Kaslovia to find out. If he stole them, he stole them to use. I see you hold the same theory. If we find them in his possession, it will be proof positive that he hypnotized me without my knowledge. Thompson uses ether, cocaine and chloroform in his practice. But I have no memory of his ever giving me anything to deaden the pain when he pulled a molar for me. He placed me in a peculiar position in his chair. I remember gazing intently at the dial of a 24-hour clock upon the wall. I felt his hand steal softly over my forehead and I became unconscious of my surroundings. When I came to, my tooth was gone. I felt no pain. I am sure that I must have been unconscious for over an hour—unless I made a mistake in the time I came to him for treatment. After pulling the tooth he asked, 'Did it hurt?' and there was a sardonic grin on his face.

"To make a long story short," said Longman, "I visited Dr. Thompson's office in the hotel. He was busily engaged in sterilizing a pair of forceps when I entered. I took them from his hands, exclaiming: 'These are Dr. Wright's forceps!' He staggered back, pressing his hands to his heart, and fell limp upon the floor. The shock of discovery was too much for him. Dr Wright identified his forceps and drill. I found three cans of ether with Jones' price mark on them. The proofs were conclusive.

"We called in a physician to attend to the dentist. He only revived long enough to confess that he had hypnotized Haynes, Adolph Miller, Jones, and Wright, and made them bring such goods as he named to him. He died while signing the confession."

"A remarkable case," mused the inspector. "The time must come when the law must take cognizance of hypnotism. You have done well. You must allow me to congratulate you!"

"You win!" said Secretary Jenks; "accept my congratulations also. You are a credit to the force and much may be expected of you!"

The End.

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RING TO RIDGEPOLE

A Boy's Struggle to Become the World's Greatest Circus Performer

By John Miller Gregory

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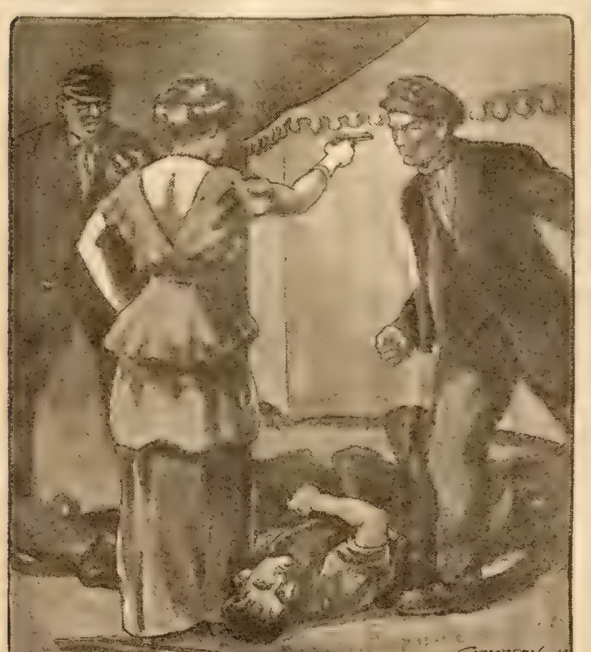
Begun in No. 43, October 24. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

FOR a moment Bert was nonplused, then he recovered himself and started to run, grasping Mary by the hand. With a roar that sounded like the bellow of a bull, the big man was after him, but the circus performers knew the way better than he, and they dodged around the tent stakes and ropes which reached out and grabbed their pursuer, all but throwing him to the ground.

The man's yell communicated itself to the others and with a cry like the howl of hungry wolves, they swarmed over the lot. They had come to the lot looking for trouble, and trouble was awaiting them. A cry went over the lot, wild and shrill, a cry that sent a thrill through the heart of every circus man, and made the girl running at Bert's side gasp out.



"I'll shoot the first man that touches him!"

"Hey Rube! Hey Rube! H-e-y R-u-b-e!"

It rose on the night air like a call to arms, stringing out into a long drawn wail, and followed by another cry, a cheer, as the circus men dropped their work and dashed for the stake wagons.

"Hey Rube! At 'em, boys! Hey Rube! Hey Rube."

It was the first time Bert had ever heard the call, and the sound sent a chill down his back. The door to the treasurer's office in front of him dashed open, and Stark showed in the light, the anxious faces of the ticket-sellers peering over his shoulders.

Over the circus lot now there was the roar of many men urging their comrades to battle; one crowd bent on destruction; the other in a desperate effort to save the show property. At such times, the circus men stand together. The owner's interest was the paramount object of the struggle. They fought desperately without knowing why. Stakes crunched on unprotected heads; brawny canvas men, used to roughing it and glorying in their strength, mixed hand to hand, fist to face, with their attackers; performers, officials and roughnecks back to back pounded and heaved and battled for a common interest. Over the roar of the shambles arose again and again the cry of the circus men, "Hey Rube! Hey Rube! Hey Rube!" And the fight went on.

A moment Stark stood in the doorway, then he was out to lead his force of sweating, fighting men. In desperation the treasurer stowed their bags of silver and bills in the steel safes set under the counter and slammed the heavy doors. Then grasping their pistols, the men rushed to the doorway, to guard the night's receipts.

Others had joined the man behind Bert and they were gaining on him. In gasping breaths he urged Mary to run on alone to the ticket wagon and let him stay to fight it out, but she grasped his hand tighter and begged him to hurry. Twenty feet from the wagon, their pursuers were upon them.

"Here she is, fellers," the big man shouted as his hand again fell on Bert's collar and pulled him back. "Here's the kid that soaked me, too. Now I'm going to make them apologize

Bert's head was high, and his breath came in little sobs through his quivering nostrils. The fight of the mob and the circus men was coming closer, veering from side to side of the lot as one or another side gained a momentary advantage.

With a scream of defiance Bert was on his antagonist. He struck madly, shouting for help at the same time. One of the men in the office started toward him, a pistol flashing in the red light of the circus torches around the lot, then he thought of the money in the safe and stopped. A moment he hesitated and threw his pistol. It fell at the girl's feet.

Kicking, biting and scratching, Bert was locked at the big man's throat, pummeling and being pummeled, until the sounds of the fighting grew dim in his ears. His head swam and ached and his heart swelled and swelled as if it would burst from his heaving chest. The man grasped his throat, choking him.

Then with a burst of oaths dripping from their lips, the others rushed upon them. One of them grasped Bert by the collar and pulled him off their panting, bleeding comrade. But now Mary had the pistol in her hand. One shot she fired in the air, and the sound caused a momentary pause in the fight that raged at a little distance from the group. The circus men saw what was happening and rushed toward them. But Mary was as calm as if she was flying high in the air on her trapeze. Her voice rang clear over the noise that had again broken out, "I'll shoot the first man that touches him," she screamed. The men fell back, and the next moment the circus men rushed upon them, striking right and left with their stakes, battering them down, hurling them back. With a little moan of pity Mary flung aside her pistol and dropped to her knees by Bert's side. Half unconscious, with blood streaming down his face, he heard her voice as if it came from a great distance.

"Bert! Bert! Dear Bert, you are not hurt, are you? Speak to me, Bert, speak to me! You must speak. I can't lose you—I can't."

CHAPTER X.

BERT lay on his back in his berth for a week after the fight. The big man had pummeled him harder than he had realized at the time, and the pain in his head refused to leave. He had many things to think over. The first was of Mary and what she had said to him as he lay there on the circus lot, with the men fighting around him, the torches casting their red, flickering light upon the scene, and the cry of "Hey Rube!" going backward and forward.

He had been in many fights since boyhood, but this had been his first riot. He wondered if he had conducted himself as a man should. He repented that he had been so weak that he had to give up the conflict before the fight had finished.

The circus men stopped by his berth the day after the fight and recounted their glorious victory. None of them knew how the fight had started. Some thought one way, some another. All knew that a gang of miners had come to the lot bent on trouble and had found it. Fortunately the show property had suffered no damage, and Stark himself, hating a "Hey Rube" as he did, had only words of commendation for the men that had fought so valiantly for him and his property. To him Bert told the whole story, and Stark had grinned and patted him on the shoulder. That was all, but it was enough for Bert. So long as Stark thought he acted rightly, he was satisfied.

Mary was indefatigable in her care for Bert. She stopped the first thing every morning to learn how he was getting on, then, assured that the invalid was recovering rapidly and ought soon to be back in the show, she would hurry off to the dining car and bring him a breakfast which she fixed on a tray herself and made more dainty than it was when the circus cooks handed it out to her.

He was glad that Mary was caring for him, and he started once or twice to ask her to repeat what she had said that night just before he lost consciousness, but each time Mary switched the subject and afterward Bert was glad. He knew he was not in position yet to marry her. He felt, in justice to her, that his position with the show ought to be more assured. He should have money ahead in case of some unforeseen mishap. The great difficulty that beset him was the necessity of making himself more valuable to the show. At present his place could be filled by any one. He was only one of a thousand other performers scattered over the country, any one of whom would come on the show and do good work for the same money he was receiving.

He had learned that the money in the circus business was made by the owners of the big riding and aerial acts. These men got their acts together, rehearsed them and paid salaries to the performers who worked in the act. The circus paid the owners for the act, and there was left over always a neat sum for the owner of the act after his salaries were paid. Besides the names of these acts were widely advertised and each year the act became more valuable.

He spoke to Ben Hudson, his berthmate, about it one night and Hudson was enthusiastic over forming an act. Hudson himself lacked the executive ability of which Bert thought himself possessed but he was willing to come with Bert in any sort of an act.

"It'll mean a lot of hard extra work," said Bert. "We'll have to put up our rigging on the lot every day and practice our stunts. You know what that means. Parade and work, then the afternoon performance and more work afterwards, and the night show to top it off. Do you think you could stand the gaff?"

"I'm the best little gaff-stander on the show," said Ben. "Whatever you say goes with me."

"There's one thing you'll have to cut," said Bert. "It's none of my business and if you say so, we'll call it off, but there mustn't be any 'chasin'.'"

Ben looked up with a half grin, half flush on his face. "That goes," repeated Bert, "you've got to cut out the women.

(Continued to page twenty-one.)

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Ring to Ridgepole

(Continued from page nineteen.)

Stark don't like it because it's dangerous. A roughneck got sassy with a town girl in a Southern burg once, he told me, and she reported it to her brother. That night a bunch of his friends came down to the lot and tried to burn down the show. Stark's down on you anyhow for talking to the town girls, and if we start this stunt we've got to make good. We can't let that stuff queer the act."

"Well it's the only thing Stark's got against me," Ben growled. "I don't booze and I do my work as well as any of the others. If a fellow wants to chin with a bunch of nutty dames what's crazy about a showman, I can't see no harm in it. But if you say so, it's all off. I'll be good."

The next day when Mary came to see him, Bert broached the subject, and was disappointed to find that she didn't enter into his project with the readiness he expected.

"It's not that I don't want to make more money," she objected, "but I have Bobby to look after. We do a nice, double trap act and Bobby's getting to be some tumbler. In another season he'll be getting more money and Stark wants to sign our trap act up at an advance for next year. We've started on a line of stuff and I think we'd better stick to it."

"Bobby's just the one we want in the act," Bert insisted, "he's light and so are you. We couldn't get two better flyers if we looked the country over. We'll start in to frame up a nice casting act, then next winter we'll go somewhere and fix up the big act. I'll do the casting and Ben can catch. He's sure and strong, so there won't be any danger of our dropping you."

Well I'll talk it over with Bobby," she promised. "But won't hold out any hope. What Bobby says goes."

That night Bert went back to his act in the show. He took Stark's advice to take it easy, and cut out the most difficult stuff at the end of the show, his double trap act with Ben. Feeling a little tired, he hurried through the changing to his street clothes and started for the cars. As he went back through the side wall of the dressing tent, he saw Ben talking to a girl. He stood in the shadows and watched them. After a while they went off together. Ben caught the car as it was pulling out that night. "Gee," he muttered as he crawled into his berth beside Bert, "if I'd been a minute later I'd 'a' missed the train. Stark sent me down to pay a bill and I had to walk down to the track."

CHAPTER XI.

WITHOUT referring to the girl he had seen him with that night, Bert went over carefully, the following week, the details of his plans to Ben. "I think I can get Mary Valerno and the kid with us," he said, "and that'll make a nice little casting act. It will be a starter, anyhow. If the act goes all right we can spread it out. I'm going over to the big show tomorrow and see how they work it."

The Donlin Brothers' show, the largest in the world, was playing in a nearby city, and Bert obtained permission without trouble to go over and spend the day. Some of the boys gave him notes of introduction to performers on the other show and insisted he should look them up.

But Bert went on business. The parade had no sooner got back to the lot, than he sought out Mart Rawson, owner of the big flying act known as The Flying Rawsons, and told him what he intended doing. Mart was most willing to give him suggestions.

He took Bert into the big top and showed him how his rigging was made and how he lashed it to the top of the tent. Bert examined it carefully, noting that it was made of heavy piping with rounded edges so that all possibility of gashing the performer's flesh was done away with, if an accident precipitated one of them against it. He saw how the rigging could be changed by the addition of bars on hinges from a flying to a casting act, and how the smaller trapezes were fixed to the rigging so that the act could appear larger and everybody could work at once. Mart showed him how the cradles were fastened to both ends of the framework, and explained how they pulled the rigging from the ground by ropes and pulleys and guyed it out.

That afternoon Bert saw the show, but he had eyes only for the aerial acts. The Drakonian brothers fascinated him as no act had ever done. They were the best "flyers" in the world, working alone in an end ring, while the big Rawson act worked in the center. Used as he was to thrilling performances on his own show, Bert found himself on several occasions holding his breath and gasping as the brothers would fly gracefully from the cradles of their rigging, swing into the air, and releasing the trapeze bars, pirouette and whirl over and over in double somersaults before they caught with unerring instinct the flying bar of the trapeze opposite them. Taking in all the details of the Drakonian and the Rawson acts, Bert found them doing some of the things that he could do, but many more that he had never even tried. The sight made him grit his teeth and vow to go them better.

When Mart came out of the dressing tent and met Bert waiting for him, he explained the working of the Rawson act. "It's all in the frame-up," he said. "There are workers and stallers in all acts. I try to have at least four good workers in my acts, and I get the best stallers I can. My partner and myself do all the heavy work and most difficult tricks and some of the flying. My wife catches for me and his wife for him. Both are strong women and absolutely sure. I trained them to be careful not only of themselves but of the others working with them. Besides us four, there are two girls, a young fellow about sixteen, who makes up as a girl and does some clever stuff, and a kid of thirteen. The two young girls do the stalling with the kid in the top trapezes. One of the girls and the young fellow do most of the flying. They all do drops from the top trapeze at the end of the act, and the kid has the prettiest dive I ever saw. I figure his dive alone is worth what I pay him, but it took me nearly two years' constant work to teach him."

Two years to teach a boy how to dive!

Bert pondered over those words, which opened up a new line of thought to him. He had started out to be the greatest aerial performer in the business, and Mart's careless expression told him that a tremendous amount of work lay before him.

"How long did it take Bill Drakonian to do that double pirouette and double somersault and catch?" he asked.

"Just six years," said Mart. "He started for that when he was twenty. He's twenty-six now, and he only began using it this season."

"It's great, ain't it?" Bert said.

"It's the greatest stunt ever done in the air," amended Mart. "If a man can do what Billy does and add a triple somersault and catch to it, he'll be the greatest aerial performer that ever lived."

Bert stuck out his hand. "Good-by," he said, "I've got to catch a train back to the show. "I'm going to do that triple and catch one of these days."

Mart laughed. "So long and good luck to you," he wished. "I tried it myself and I haven't been able to do the double yet."

On the journey back to the show, Bert sat in the smoking car, thinking deeply. The longer he thought the more determined he became to do the triple somersault, double pirouette and catch. He realized it meant work to learn the trick, but that was nothing considering his qualifications. He felt sure he could do a single pirouette, double somersault and catch now, although he had never tried flying. As the train pulled into the station he registered a solemn vow to turn the big trick or go out of the business.

As he stepped from the car Ben rushed up to him and grasped his hand. "It's all off," was his greeting. "Harry Carroll's beat you to it. He's going to put up a casting act and Mary Valerno and the kid are going to work with him. He got to the kid first, and as Bobby liked the idea Mary went in the act."

"Gee, that's tough," Bert said with a little catch in his voice. He stood looking into the distance where the tops of the big tents could be seen bellying in the afternoon breeze. A hand seemed to grip at his heart and hurt. His deep disappointment showed in his eyes. He drew a long breath, something like a sigh, and brusehd away the moisture that unbidden was wetting the ends of his eyelids.

"Well!" Bert put out a hand and rested it fondly on Ben's broad shoulder. "That means we'll have to find somebody else, doesn't it?" He walked slowly off toward the show cars, his head hung in reflection.

CHAPTER XII.

BERT went to work on his new act as if his life depended upon it. He had saved a little money and with this he bought piping and made a rigging for a casting act. It was smaller than that of Mart Rawson's but adequate to Bert's purposes. He and Ben made their net. It was long and narrow and without an apron such as the big flying acts have to use.

"There won't be much danger of our going out of the net in a casting act," said Ben, "if we don't throw the flyer too hard, so this net ought to do."

Bert had been counting his balance that morning after he paid for the net twine. He grinned. "Do? It'll have to do if it breaks our necks. We're just about busted."

Mary saw but little of Bert during those days. She was busy with Harry Carroll's new act, and she had developed a sort of timidity in Bert's presence, as if she felt she had not treated him fairly. She tried to explain it by saying that Bobby wanted to go with Carroll because of his friendship for the older man, and that what Bobby wanted she had to do, but the explanation fell so lamely that Bert laughed and teased her about it. Then, womanlike, she pretended that she did not go with Bert because of something he had said, and she left him in a huff because he had slighted her.

Bert had broached the subject of the casting to another woman on the show, a slenderly built little thing, the wife of one of the advance agents. She was anxious to make some money, and grabbed at the offer Bert made her.

"It ain't as I wanted it to be," Bert told Ben. "The act ain't big enough with only one flyer, but it's a starter. I think this little woman will work hard, and she's light and lively enough. I'm afraid her health won't stand it, though."

But the little woman did better than Bert had anticipated. She was a hard worker and she liked both Bert and Ben, and entered into practice with a vim and determination that put them both on edge to keep up with her. Often, when tired from their work at the afternoon show, they would try to shirk practice, but Helen would haul them out to the rigging and force them to work if it was only for a few minutes. Before long they had an act that was absolutely sure and different from any act in the show. When Bert realized this, he went to Stark with a proposition.

"Let us put this act in the show," he said, "and it won't cost you much. We're breaking it in for next season, and we're going to put a lot more stuff in it. But right now, we need practice."

"I can't give you much money for it," Stark objected, "but I'll make it enough to increase yours and Ben's take-off some, and pay the salary of the girl. If that's satisfactory, all right. If it ain't, Harry Carroll is breaking in an act of the same kind and I'll take him on."

That settled it with Bert. He closed an agreement immediately and signed a contract for the act for the remainder of the season. They put it on that night, each of the three dressed in new suits of bright pink tights, and the act was a big hit. Even the show people congratulated them, and talked among themselves of the value to the show of the additional attraction. Harry Carroll was the only one who kicked. He was a little hurt that Bert had signed up his act with Stark first. Consequently he could see nothing in Bert's act, and vowed that his would be better in every way.

"We'll have two flyers as soon as I can get a catcher," he said to Stark, "and we'll put it all over that Kingdon act. The dame doing the flying with him don't stand one, two, three with Mary Valerno."

"Maybe not," replied Stark, who liked Bert, "neither can you do the stuff Bert Kingdon does." He started off, and as an afterthought, turned and added, "And believe me, Harry, you never will do it."

Mary and Bobby were delighted with the new act and told Bert so that night as they stood outside the dressing tent before going to the cars. "I knew you could do it," Mary said, "and I told Harry Carroll so, but you know we are with his act, and we have to stick by him."

"Sure," said Bert, "I wish you were with me, but we'll let it go as it lies."

He walked away as Harry Carroll came up and joined Mary and Bobby. As the three walked toward the cars, Bert noticed with a grim feeling he couldn't down, that Mary and Carroll walked very close together and talked earnestly. Then, instinctively, his mind went to its forbidden subject, Mary herself. Without thinking what he was doing he followed them disconsolately to the cars. On the way they stopped at a stand and bought some sandwiches, and it made Bert feel lonely that he had no one with whom he could take his lunch.

Mary was getting prettier, he thought, every day. Her eyes seemed to be getting brighter and her cheeks were rosier than ever. There grew up in his heart a bitter feeling against Carroll, who somehow, because of his monopoly of Mary, seemed to Bert to be the cause of all his troubles. His common sense told him over and over that he had no right to expect Mary to marry him until he had gained a prominent position in his chosen work, and he tried to reason the matter out, but whenever he did so he found that reason was silenced by an insistent voice which kept exclaiming over and over again, "I love her! I love her!"

When he came to the cars, the others were already there saying good night on the car steps. Bert seated himself on a log near the cars and waited for Mary to go in. He felt hardly equal to speaking to her again that night. Finally he rose, determined to walk off his fit. Instinctively his eyes turned to the girl standing on the car steps in the moonlight. Her hand was in Carroll's, and she was looking down at him with a smile on her face. Bert thought they remained longer than was necessary in this position for a casual good night, and he turned sharply and made off down the track.

Her voice followed him. "Good night, Bert," she called.

His soul was bitter against her. Without heeding her call he continued grimly on his way.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day Bert rose with a splitting headache, something he had hardly ever known since he joined the show. He knew that it came from an almost sleepless night which had been made miserable by his thoughts of Mary. There in his little berth, with Ben snoring beside him, Bert had fought through the night, his greatest fight. It was a fight against himself, and the thought that he had won was as balm to his soul. He knew, as he sat there in his berth holding his head between his hands, that he had himself in complete control now; that nothing that Mary might say or do would influence his future actions and the success he determined to make for himself in the circus world. He peered

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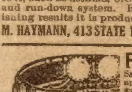

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W. C. WATKINS, Parnassus, Pa.

through his window and saw a bank of threatening clouds. At that moment Ben awoke with a grouch, as if taking his mood from the weather.

When the two went to the lot that morning everything seemed to be going wrong. It had rained during the night and the mud arose over their shoe tops, so that they had to return to the cars for their rubber boots. When they got back to the lot the canvas men were trying to raise the canvas, but it was heavy with the rain and mud, and the soggy ground held the stakes with difficulty.

Helen appeared on the lot shortly after the parade, which had only served to increase the general ill-nature of the circus people. She demanded that they practice the new trick which they had tried in their act the night before and failed in through a fault of hers, but Ben objected to putting up the rigging in the mud, and declared he would do no work either that morning or after the afternoon show in spite of Bert's insistence.

"What do you think I am?" he demanded with a hot show of anger. "I'm working my head off for this act now, and what do I get out of it? If you were any sort of a manager you'd make Stark pay you more for it, but you are willing to go along donating it to his show for the fun of the thing."

Bert flamed fighting mad at the charge. "What are you kicking at?" he flung back. "You're getting more now than you ever made in your life, and next season we'll double it. But instead of getting down to work and trying to do something for the act, you are willing to let it stand like it is and beef about getting more money."

"I put most of the stuff in it, didn't I?" retorted Ben. "What did you know about a casting act, anyway? What you ought to be doing is stacking hay. I've been in this business five years, and you come here trying to tell me what to do."

In better humor Bert would have restrained his anger, but now he thought only of hurting Ben, whose ingratitude stung into his soul. "If you'd spend less time talking to Helen and more in working we'd have a better act," he roared. "Everybody on the show's talking about you two."

Ben started forward, his fist clenched, but Helen stepped between them. Her face was up and blazing red with anger, and her little black eyes snapped.

"You fiend—you devil—you liar!" she spluttered until she found her speech, then she railed out at Bert in a torrent of burning words. "Let them talk!" she screamed. "Let them talk! And you talk with them and see if we care. He's a better man than you ever dared to be with your bullying and rag-chewing. You think because you've got a good job on this show that you're up with the big ones. Well, you're mistaken! I'll tell you what you are. You're a big country simp. You're letting Stark string you along for a good thing, and you haven't got sense enough to see it. He's making you like it and laughing at you behind your back. You're a fine manager, you are. If I was running this act, we'd be getting some money for it. As it is Stark will use us until Harry Carroll gets his act ready, then he'll can us and take that act on."

Bert attempted to get in a word of remonstrance, but she kept on.

"As for Ben here, he makes the act. What do you do that anybody couldn't do? You jumped on me for blowing the trick last night, when it was your own fault. Ask Ben, he'll tell you. You didn't throw me far enough, that's why Ben dropped me. You haven't even got strength enough to throw me, that's what's the matter with you. Me and Ben could take this act and get a caster that could throw, and we'd make money out of it, but as long as we stay with you, about all we'll get is conversation."

With a toss of her head in disgust she turned to Ben and together they walked off the lot.

Bert was bitter against them and inwardly he was raging like a smoldering volcano, but he kept his tongue and let them go. His philosophy taught him that the best way for a manager to handle his people was never to lose his temper when they were angry, but he determined to have it out that night with Ben after the show and settle the question of supremacy once for all. He knew that he must be the head of his act if he was to get the greatest efficiency from his workers and the consequent spur to his own endeavors, and he resolved to let Helen and Ben go and get others in their places if this could not be attained with them.

That afternoon Helen and Ben worked as they had never worked on the act. Neither referred to the row they had had with Bert that morning, and both seemed determined to appear at their best advantage. Even Bert felt keyed to the highest pitch, and when the difficult new trick came on, he threw Helen with such force that Ben hardly had to lean out from his cradle, on which he was hanging by his knees, to catch the girl as she whirled twice in the air and reached for his hands. Bert smiled to himself. He felt that hereafter he would have plain sailing.

After the night performance Bert rushed to the dressing tent to find Ben before his partner should have left the tent. But Ben was nowhere in sight.

"Where's Ben?" Bert asked a clown who was sitting on a nearby trunk taking off his makeup.

"I dunno," mumbled the clown, his face full of soapsuds. "He rushed in here and said he was going to blow the concert. Said something was the matter with his trunk, and he took it out with him under the side wall. I haven't seen him since."

With a half-formed dread in his mind, Bert dashed out of the men's dressing tent and towards the entrance to the women's section. "Where's Helen?" he demanded of the wardrobe woman whom he saw passing the entrance.

The woman waddled back into the tent and returned a moment later shaking her head. "Gone," she said. "She's been out of here for fifteen minutes. Didn't say where she was going, but you might find her near the ticket wagon. She goes there every night to hear from her old man."

Bert was fully aroused now, but he knew he dared not give expression to his thoughts. At the wagon they had heard nothing of Helen, and this was strange, the treasurer said, as she never missed a night coming by the wagon on her way down to the cars, unless she was ill.

The suggestion came as a momentary light to Bert. That was it, she must be feeling badly. He rushed down to the cars and ran into the sleeper where Helen had her berth. The berth was empty and the porter had seen nothing of Helen since she left the car for the night show. He examined the berth and popped his head out a moment later with a surprised look in his eyes.

"Somethin' wrong, sho'," he said, "she done tuk all her clothes an' things."

Bert went out of the car with his head

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Thanks a Thousand Times

I received the Machine a month ago and I am very pleased with it. It is a beauty in every way. I thank you a thousand times for it. I am proud to own it and I have had so much fun with it that I could not write to you before to tell you that I received it. John Crymes, 524 Ave. C, Bayonne, N. J.

Fifty Friends Saw It

I received your Moving Picture Machine last Monday and that night I showed it. I had about fifty friends. They could not all fit in my theater. I am very proud of my Machine, it is a dandy, and my friends say they wish they could have one too. Alex Mentler, 2666 Lisbon Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.

20th Century Entertainer

I received my Moving Picture Machine and thank you. I worked it the same day I got it, and it worked fine. I find it a Twentieth Century Entertainer, and I don't think any home is complete without one of your Moving Picture Machines. Henry Thurman, 317 S. Johnson St., New Orleans, La.

Sold 300 Tickets

I am very thankful for that wonderful Machine and I think it is the best I have ever seen. I am going to have an entertainment today and therefore I have not much time to write letters. I think I will make about $10.00. I have sold 300 tickets already. Joseph Rauch, 2411 W. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

Made $15.00 With It

I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know I received my Moving Picture Machine, and it is a beauty. I never saw a better Machine than this. The first day I got the Machine, I started off and made $15.00 with it. Master J. Hughes, 908 Hamilton, Duquesne, Pa.

Made $2.00 In One Night

With all pleasure I write to tell you that I received my Moving Picture Machine about six months ago, and I made $2.00 in one night, and hope that my friend Jerry Leigh's will be as good as mine. And I lost my list so please send me another one. Paul G. Taylor, 5 Pratt St., Newnan, Ga.

More Than Expected

I am very well pleased with the Moving Picture Machine which I received in good condition, as it is more than what I expected. I thank you very much for it, and it is the first time I ever tried such a thing. Ben W. Jenson, R. R. 2, Des Moines, Iowa.

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I find my Moving Picture Machine a fine one. I am satisfied with it in every way. No Machine can come up to it. I give shows regularly and everybody is satisfied with its fine work. W. A. Mulford, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

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This machine is made of Russian Metal, black Japan, eight-wheel mechanism which drives the Moving Pictures; excelsior diaphragm lens, triple polished; standard double extra reflector, throwing ray of light many feet, enlarging the picture up to three or four feet in diameter; lamp is fitted with a great safety carbide generator, and produces the highest light power. Has far greater light power than the ordinary electric light, producing 500 candle-power on the screen and bringing out every detail of the picture with pronounced distinctness. A child can learn in five minutes how to run this really wonderful Machine.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Films are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

The Films are taken one after another, about 1-100 of a second apart, as the object is passing, and thus its every action is brought out clearly in the picture. They are exact reproductions of the films used by the standard machines in all the large Moving Picture Theaters. I will ship you a fine Machine all complete and ready to give a Moving Picture Show the minute you receive it. REMEMBER, THERE WILL BE NO DELAY.

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hanging and his brow wrinkled in thought. His task seemed suddenly harder than it ever had before, and he was tempted to throw it over and drift along in the way of the average performer. He knew now that success in the circus business was the same as success in any other line of endeavor; that it came only after the hardest kind of knocks and the most determined effort to get ahead in spite of all obstacles. The future rose before him in terrifying vividness, and he went into his sleeper and threw himself disconsolately into his berth. As the train moved out Bert was lying there in his clothes, wracked with bitter thoughts, and the place Ben had occupied beside him was empty.

This remarkable story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

And George Did.

The new battleship schools instituted by the Secretary of the Navy have made some startling contributions to literature. Here is the essay of a Filipino sailor who was told to write about George Washington:

George Wassingham was sore because Americal persons is not free. He sale to England on —— (naming his own battleship) and say to King "I express declaracion of indypendence for Americal persons." King he say "Nothin' doin'" and Mr. Wassingham tell Admiral Dewey to shoot turret guns at him. Bime-by King he say he will not rule Americal persons egain. "Let George do it" say King and today Americal persons is free.

* * *

Of Course.

Of a certain attorney his younger rivals relate the following amusing anecdote. 'Tis better thus told in the ancient anecdote style, too and also.

One day the office bell sent forth a shrill jingle, and the office boy hastened, in as far as haste was in him, to answer it. After a suitable interval he re-entered the inner office and said:

"A client wishes to see you, sir."

"An old client or a new one?" asked the lawyer.

"A new one, of course," answered the boy.

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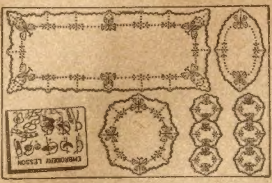

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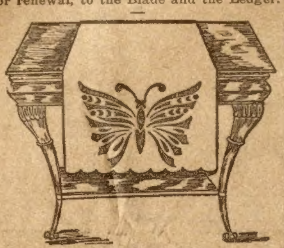

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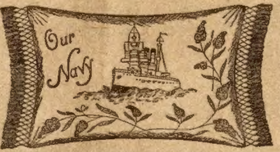

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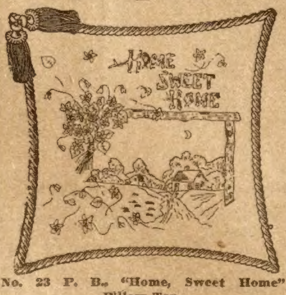

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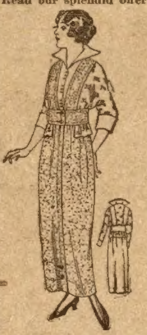

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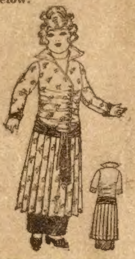

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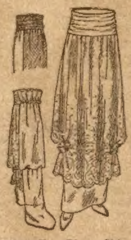

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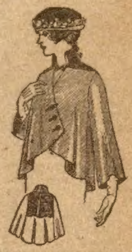

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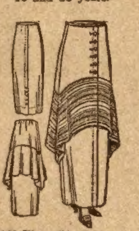

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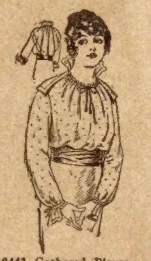

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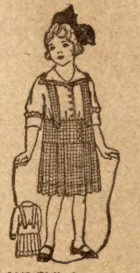

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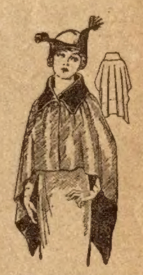

8430 Gathered Cape with Large Collar, One Size.

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Arkansas City, Kans. J. D. ROGERS

Says Largest Rupture Was CURED In Seven Months Time

"For twenty years I have suffered with double rupture. Wore the Schuiling Rupture Lock steadily for seven months, and found that the largest rupture was entirely cured, but the other side was a little weak yet, so will wear a pad on that side for a little while yet for protection. Let anyone that wishes write me. I will be glad to answer."

Ludington, Mich. A. J. TOWER

Says Schuiling Rupture Lock CURED Him in About 2 Months

"I purchased one of your Schuiling Rupture Locks. I found it was an anchor and Lock sure enough, for it stayed just where I put it. In about two months the rupture was well, but I wore the Lock about a month longer until I was sure I was strong. I then took the Lock off and found I was entirely sound."

Garland, Kansas. S. J. BRYANT

Father Says Boy Was CURED In Three Months

"My boy Carl was ruptured since birth. It kept getting larger all the time. I got a Rupture Lock for myself and bought one for the boy, too. We put it on him and in three months' time he was all well. I will gladly tell any one writing me about our cases."

EDWARD E. DICKERSON,
Cor. Prescott and Division Sts. Grand Rapids, Mich.

Feels That He Is Now CURED Wears Lock for Safety

"I have been ruptured for seven years. Have worn nearly every kind of truss. Never found one which would hold my rupture until I got a Schuiling Rupture Lock. The rupture never came down a single time after putting the Lock on. I feel that I am cured, but for the sake of safety I am going to wear it a little longer."

R. F. D. No. 6, Canton, Texas. C. W. STEEL

Glorious Blessings That Every Rupture Sufferer Can Now Enjoy

"Down Again"

A Common Occurrence to Those Who Wear Ill-Fitting Trusses.

Have you not had this same thing happen to you in getting off or on a street car, or in straining or exerting your body in some slight way? You know what misery it causes you.

But do you know that you are liable to serious injury, every time your rupture slips down and is pinched beneath a truss pad?

This never happens to wearers of the Schuiling Rupture Lock, for once it is properly adjusted it holds with wonderful firmness and yet with perfect comfort. It simply cannot slip or get out of place, no matter what position the wearer may get into. No matter how rough or hard or strenuous your work may be, no matter how you twist or squirm or run or jump, no matter how much you pull or tug or strain, your rupture CAN'T get pinched beneath a pad and cause you the untold misery you have perhaps often suffered from an ill-fitting truss.

SENT ON THIRTY DAYS' TRIAL

Freedom from Truss Slavery. Freedom from Rupture Misery! Perfect Holding! Perfect Comfort! Wonderful, Grand, Luxurious Relief.

Test the Wonderful Schuiling Rupture Lock in Any Way You Wish. You'll See Results You Never Dreamed Were Possible.

If you are one of the many rupture sufferers who go about harnessed up like an overburdened truck horse, with cruel steel springs, unsanitary elastic bands and leg straps, or some other uncomfortable, ill fitting contraption that is continually slipping, binding, pinching and gouging your flesh and causing you constant trouble, you can now rejoice, for at last your day of deliverance has come.

You can be free from the torture and burden. You can be free from the danger, the worry, trouble, annoyances. You enjoy freedom of action and perfect comfort 24 hours of the day. You can go about your duties no matter how hard or rough your work may be, without the slightest fear of your rupture coming down or being "pinched." You can glory and revel in the knowledge that your rupture CAN'T come down, and CAN'T get pinched, no matter what position you may get into.

That is exactly what you can expect if you are wearing the wonderful SCHUILING RUPTURE LOCK, the greatest and one of the simplest devices ever invented for the treatment and cure of rupture,—in fact you can expect more, for

Hundreds Tell of Positive Cures

Think of it, CURES! Rupture is actually being cured by this wonderful, scientific Lock. Persons who had suffered for years, persons who had wasted hundreds of dollars on cruel trusses and "harness" contraptions and had lost all hope of ever finding a cure; persons who would have been overjoyed and delighted with even comforting relief, say that they have found more than they had hoped for and hundreds have written that soon after putting on the WONDERFUL SCHUILING RUPTURE LOCK the rupture openings grew smaller and smaller and healed up entirely.

For Your Own Sake Investigate This

I want you to know what this wonderful Lock has done and what it is doing today for hundreds of sufferers in all parts of this country. You owe it to yourself to find this out. I say it is the greatest and most wonderful, the most comfortable, the most perfect fitting and the most successful device for the treatment of rupture that has ever been invented. I WANT YOU, for your own sake, to MAKE ME PROVE IT. I want you to write to me this very day and get my free book and full particulars.

Hundreds of other sufferers are writing every day, thousands are wearing this wonderful Lock and enjoying its luxurious comforts at this moment, others who have used it a little longer are taking it off—cured and free—with no longer any need for it. Why should you continue in your misery?

You Need Not Risk a Penny

You can get the wonderful SCHUILING RUPTURE LOCK and wear it for 30 days, you can put it on and try it, you can enjoy the welcome relief it will give you, you can test it by walking, by jumping, by running, by pulling and straining and tugging to your heart's content, to prove that it will HOLD your rupture as nothing else has EVER done, prove that it will give you the COMFORT, ease and freedom you have so longed for. You can prove by actual experience in your own case that it will give you MORE relief, MORE COMFORT, MORE peace of mind than you have known in many a day and you can do all this without the risk of a penny.

Send for Free Book and Trial Offer

You do not obligate yourself in any way by sending for our new, illustrated book, which fully describes the SCHUILING RUPTURE LOCK AND HOW IT WORKS. I want you to see it and read it. I will gladly send it to you free and postage paid and will also send you full particulars of our 30-day trial offer.

Send today, now—NOW while you are thinking of it and have the address before you. Just tear off the coupon, write your name and address plainly and mail it; or write a note or post card if you prefer. You'll be thankful the longest day you live.

The Real Test

A Michigan telephone man wearing a Schuiling Rupture Lock, says he can climb telephone poles without fear of the Lock slipping or rupture coming down.

A Montana ranchman writes us that since putting on the Schuiling Rupture Lock, he rides and "breaks" WILD horses, and that it holds his rupture perfectly.

Railroad men, blacksmiths, farmers, teamsters; men doing all kinds of hard, rough work are wearing Schuiling Rapture Locks, and say their ruptures never come down or cause them the slightest distress.

I want to send you letters from these men and many others. Mail this coupon today and let me explain in detail the most wonderful rupture device ever known.

TRIAL COUPON—SEND THIS TODAY

SCHUILING RUPTURE INSTITUTE, No. 105 E. Georgia St., Indianapolis, Ind.

Please Send 30-day Trial Offer, and Book, "How to Treat Rapture," all FREE.

Name ....

Street or R. F. D. ....

Town .... *State* ....